



WE, THE PEOPLE

Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe

edited by Diana Mishkova



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Edited by

DIANA MISHKOVA



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400 West 59th Street, New York NY 10019, USA
Tel: +1-212-547-6932
Fax: +1-646-557-2416
E-mail: mgreenwald@sorosny.org

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INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL PECULIARITY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

DIANA MISHKOVA

THE PROJECT

This volume is the result of a 15-month research work which brought together young scholars from different Southeast-European academic cultures on a project initiated and hosted by the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia in partnership with Collegium Budapest.¹ The project entitled *We, the People. Visions of National Peculiarity and Political Modernities in Southeastern Europe*, is inscribed into a broad and daunting design: to help craft a more coherent methodological and structural framework for dealing with questions of collective identity and the institutionalization of national discourse in the context of “late-coming” nation-state projects. In undertaking this task, we focused on a particular, yet critical area: exploring the political instrumentalization of key concepts describing collective identity, such as nation, folk, people, ethnos, national tradition, race, etc., with the purpose of “mapping” the discursive and institutional itineraries through which this set of notions became a focal point of cultural and political thought in various Southeast-European contexts, coincidental with the emergence of political modernity. Our intention was thus to grasp the processes of actual emergence of the terminology of collective identity in these cultures during the long 19th century.

Students of the region are likely to intuit the ties of an enquiry into the politics of national peculiarity to constitutive aspects of Southeast-European intellectual and political cultures. What we are dealing with are political traditions where the definition of the collective self had long been and, in a sense, still is, a principal question. Obviously, any attempt to grasp the processes of identity formation in contexts marked by profound discontinuities, forced structural changes and, in consequence, acute modernization dilemmas presents a major challenge to, but also a strong attraction for, the scholars reflecting on these

¹ I would like to thank the German Foreign Office and the Swedish Bank Tercentenary Foundation for the support they offered to this focus-group research and the series of attending workshops.

issues. Understanding the evolution of these cultures is, on the other hand, essential to any attempt to reconstruct the conditions of nation making, the precarious reality of the nation-state framework and, ultimately, what István Bibó had called “the fear about the existence of the community” in this part of Europe.² Therefore, whereas the connection between the questions of modernity and collective identity is a generic one, the historical trajectory of the Southeast-European societies makes the recreation of the narratives of national identity even more challenging and germane to the comprehension of these societies’ experiences of modernity.

Research in this field on a historical-regional scale has the potential to probe the existence of a regionally distinctive political culture by reconstructing the actual scope and channels of cultural interaction and highlighting cross-cultural patterns of similarity and differences. On this basis the formulation of a new set of questions and the generation of new analytical concepts becomes possible, stirring us to rethink some of the basic comparative categories of contemporary scholarship. Albeit indirectly, this also implies facing the mainstream historiographic traditions stemming from the region, which tend to interpret the evolution of social and political ideas almost exclusively within discrete national frameworks and discursive isolation. Although the individual contributions to this volume do not engage in straightforward comparative enquiries, it is the inherent dialogue between them, their inbuilt cross-references, intertwining themes and juxtaposed concepts—in brief, the polyphonic tenor of the collection as a whole—that intimates the heuristic advantages from such a negotiated comparativist approach.

The threads that created that common texture unfolded along three main lines of enquiry. One was the conceptual reconstruction of the fundamental terms of identity-building processes (e.g., folk, nation, race, national peculiarity, culture, lineage, etc.) in the chosen national traditions during the 19th century. Another sought to chart the external (mostly Western, but also intra-regional) discursive and theoretical influences, and the models and institutions of cultural transfer, in the nation-making processes in the region. The third aimed to develop a provisional map of the competing discourses in the respective thematic field. The comparative setting thus orchestrated yielded, at the end of the day, important new results. It made it possible to highlight the cross-cultural mechanisms of reception of certain scholarly paradigms coming from Western Europe and, at the same time, allowed us to detect

2 Bibó (1986), p. 162.

some almost completely neglected intra-regional cross-fertilizations. The aspiration to devise an interpretative framework locating the major ideological traditions at play in the various national contexts, on the other hand, sparked off several fundamental questions: what were the ideological options for constructing the national “ideologems”?; could the labels commonly used in the scholarly literature for certain configurations (such as populism, liberal nationalism, racism, etc.,) be used in these contexts or do we have to develop an alternative conceptual framework for dealing with these phenomena?; what criteria should guide attempts at classifying the nationalisms in the region? While we took the contested nature of national identity—the multitude of inventions and the struggle over their meanings—essentially for granted,³ our hope was to go one step further by throwing the main forces behind this diversity into relief and exposing their cross-cultural embeddedness.

The main asset of the project was due to the unusual intensity of comparative teamwork and interpretative negotiation. As a result, a number of more precise questions could be formulated, which created underlying links among the individual research agendas. Such questions concerned the modalities and typology of political nationalism in Central and Southeastern Europe (“supra-national,” “a-national,” “imperial,” etc.); the ideological function of popular representation and its institutions; the relation of confessional and national identities (especially the politicization of religion in the last decades of the 19th century); the “paradigm-shifts” of the national discourses (mid-19th century, *fin-de-siècle*, post-1914); the professionalization of science; and, finally, the itinerary of various theories of ethno-genesis and of race, kinship, etc. The intentional focus was on certain themes, texts and figures which could present a synoptic overview of the common traits and the local peculiarities of the traditions under exploration. Our objective along the way was that, while developing their individual research projects around these common questions, the members of the team could come up with something more than the usual collection of unrelated research papers: a shared vision of the main lines of the history of political ideas in Southeastern Europe in the long 19th century, thus providing an example of a new type of “negotiated” historiography in the region.⁴

3 The “Inventing the Nation” series (ed. by Keith Robbins), London, Arnold, which includes publications on several countries in Europe and Asia, is illustrative of the kind of studies concentrating on these issues within specific national frameworks.

4 In this respect, the “We, the People” team work could build upon the experience and the insights gained in the course of a preceding, broadly comparative project of CAS Sofia, *Dis-*

In a sense our venture may also be seen as a response to the so-called “political myths of identity” in Southeastern Europe which during the last two decades were the ones primarily studied in a typologically comparative manner, thus, in a way, pathologizing these intellectual and discursive traditions and attributing to them the chronic conflictuality of the region. It is our hope that the thematic focus and the approach proposed here will shed a different light on the local traditions of political and social thought by way of demonstrating the potentiality and creativity of local projects in confronting the crucial challenges of modernity and devising new structures of social cohesion. The notion of “people” or “folk” is considered to be heuristically operative in this respect, in that it can bridge the cultural and the political dimensions of nation making—the upsurge of national consciousness and the emergence of the conception of popular sovereignty and democratic politics.

THE APPROACH

A common characteristic of the inquiries included in this volume is that they address theoretical issues by focusing on particular case studies. For the methodological platform of this work, two focal points have been of crucial importance: the common European “pool of ideas” and typological similarities, and the context-sensitive reconstruction of the various ways of ideological transmission, adaptation and subversion. This double-bound approach has helped us, in the first place, to map the junctures of external discursive and theoretical currents with the local intellectual dynamics and networks. The process of cultural negotiation between the 19th-century European “core” and “peripheries” has been studied from various perspectives. There exists a series of works documenting the interaction of a given local tradition with the Center mostly by scholars stemming from the respective East-European cultures but sometimes also from academic centers of the “core,” who had surveyed the reception of ideas coming from their respective countries. However, there barely exists any instance of “horizontal” thematization—neither in view of the actual interaction (e.g., how some of the ideas became paradigmatic for certain similar cases), nor in view of the typological similarities and differ-

courses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945), carried out by a team of young East-European scholars and crowned by a four-volume edition, the first two of which, *The Late Enlightenment—Emergence of the Modern “National Idea”* (2006) and *National Romanticism—The Formation of National Movements* (2007), have been published by CEU Press.

ences between the European “small nations.” The bulk of comparativist research which the 20th century bequeathed to us is marked by a strong sense of cultural superiority on the part of the European “great cultures,” commonly describing the process of reception in unilinear terms.

Our collection has engaged with the reverse perspective—from the “periphery” towards the “core.” This means, in the first place, to see the European periphery not as a passive recipient of influences emanating in the big core cultures but as a dynamic critical participant in a process of cultural exchange and adaptation. The philosophy of cultural peculiarity was not merely exported from the West to the Balkan East. It drew upon circulating cultural resources across Europe whereby local folk traditions became paradigmatic for the entire European flow of ideas. (Consider, for example, Vuk Karadžić’s role in promoting this “universalism of the particular” and the European Romantic canon generally.) What we are confronted with under the headline of conceptual or paradigm transfer has never been a one-way impact (as commonly implied by notions such as “influence,” “import,” “adoption”) but a circulation of ideas where complex trajectories of interaction and modes of involvement of the “recipient” culture occupy the center stage. In the spread of nationalism, furthermore, regional intellectual networks and institutions often were more crucial than direct contact with or intervention by the West.⁵

By saying this I do not mean to relativize the disparity in radiation and reception between the two ends of the cultural interaction. Even when the “Center” was not plainly engaged, it was, mimetically or subversively, ever and over-present. A number of asymmetries constrained the autonomy in the non-Western societies’ construction of self and other: asymmetries of political power, of access to technologies, even of vocabularies of identity.⁶ Paradigms were being imported then adjusted, sometimes beyond similarity, but always claiming resemblance to the original, thus divesting local cultures of generative and cognitive capability. Most importantly, in all these cultures the “West” participated as a major semantic constructor of the national. Binary self-projections such as “we” and “Europe,” local tradition and foreign import, authenticity and imitation, backwardness and civilization became constitutive of the “identity languages” in the region and set the framework for the perennial battles over the representation of the nation. The underlying notions of “lack” and “lag” had proved as formative of the protagonists’ agendas across

5 See Mishkova (2008).

6 Bracewell (2008), p. 66.

the ideological spectrum as they did for latter-day interpretations of East-European nationalism.⁷

However important the noted asymmetries and receptions though, there was anything but a deficit of creativity, expressive power or diversity in the politics of self-description. Indeed the modalities of identity discourses—on an intraregional, intranational, even intradisciplinary level—have proved incredibly diverse. Significantly, while the greater part of the constitutive elements were in some way present in all these contexts, they interacted differently with the local traditions and discursive milieus, thus giving rise to mutations and innovations which, with hindsight, appear as having been latent in the original “Western” ingredients themselves, but which were unlocked precisely under the “pressure” of the local environment.

Coming to terms with these complexities touches upon a problem which has become central to historical research in recent years—that of the methodological premises of comparative analysis.⁸ The study of national ideologies and identity politics makes a compelling case for an “entangled history,” combining trans-national and comparative analyses—for at least two reasons. The first one ensues from the above-mentioned paradoxical condition of their formation: the discourses of national uniqueness were forged in a context of intense international exchanges and a common matrix of producing difference.⁹ The phenomenon at issue concerns the universalization of the notion and the discourse of national uniqueness—the existence of a narrative of national authenticity available and utilized across Europe, whose authority lay precisely in its transnational referentiality. *Transnational* discourses it was, in other words, which have shaped and legitimated nations and established their supposed differences. Secondly, similar to Fredrik Barth’s definition of ethnic groups, we can argue that national ideologies cannot be understood but in relation to and interaction with each other, that they can only be defined through their dialectical relationship with one another.¹⁰ This does not mean, on the other hand, that the bounda-

7 On the “temporality” of East European nationalism see Todorova (2005), pp. 140–164.

8 See in particular, Cohen and O’Connor (2004); Conrad and Conrad (2002); Haupt and Kocka (1996); François, Siegrist, and Vogel (1995); Kaelble (1999); Marrero (2003), pp. 147–152.

9 See, *partes pro toto*, Thiesse (2005), pp. 122–143; (1999); Leerssen (2006). On “entangled histories,” see especially Werner and Zimmermann (2002), pp. 607–636; Conrad and Randeria (2002); Werner and Zimmermann (2003), pp. 1–36.

10 Barth (1969), pp. 9–38.

ries between them—or rather the material of which these boundaries were built—could not prove rigidly “real” and insurmountable, involving a series of practices of mutual separation and exclusion. Our venture posed a special challenge in this respect as it sought to highlight, and provoke reflection on, the degree of ideological and cultural similarity across rather divergent social, political and institutional frameworks.

For all that we consider the two, often counterpoised approaches—the transnational and the national—as conditioning and complementing each other. The concept of “connected histories of nationalism” (and “transnationalisms”) implies distinct national ideologies, which are, however, connected to and in communication with each other, so that they cannot be defined without reference to “other” nationalisms. This applies as much for cultural (and ideational) as for “political transfer”: the increasing nationalization of politics in the course of the 19th century went hand in hand with rising international interaction and “trading” of political models. In this respect our approach concurs with Henk te Velde’s admonition that the concept of transfer should be primarily used as a perspective and a heuristic tool—demonstrating that “things did not only happen at the same time or resemble each other, but were also connected”¹¹—rather than as an alternative model. An approach such as this is able to accommodate both an emphasis on the contingency, constructiveness and representational nature of nation making, and the differences—political, social, and religious—that marked the infrastructures of regions as they developed historically into states and nations and which played such important roles in creating representations and fostering policies about the nation.¹²

The level of analysis, on which the authors in this volume posit themselves, brings together the approaches of conceptual history, intellectual history and history of cultural transfer.¹³ Our constructivist position may be seen as “hard” in that it brings to the front the role of political and intellectual elites in nation making and asserts the historical precedence of the discourse of the nation, in

11 te Velde (2005), pp. 206–208.

12 For arguments, derived from tackling particular research problems, in favor of combining the comparative and cross-national along with the structural and post-structural, the *emic* and the *etic*, see, respectively, O’Connor (2004), pp. 133–144 and Petrusiewicz (2004), pp. 145–163.

13 See in particular Brunner, Conze, Koselleck (1972–1992); Koselleck (1985); Skinner (1979); Pocock (1972); Espagne and Werner (1988); Espagne and Middell (1993); Schalenberg (1998).

hegemonic-political and cultural sense, over its social “reality.”¹⁴ In our case the chosen unit of analysis—the folk, folk culture, nation—is not viewed as a concept with a history of its own but as a generic category encompassing various political and cultural concepts. While employing it as an organizing principle, we are primarily interested in bringing to light political discourses (or “idioms”) located in particular practices, institutions and intellectual sub-cultures. This is why we have chosen a contextualist approach focused on mapping the usages, employments, and instrumentalizations rather than on the occurrence and evolution of the concept itself.

WHY THE “PEOPLE”?

The “People” already came to be thematized as a constitutive concept of politics (or anti-politics) before the advent of Romanticism. Arguably, the Rousseauian, and in some ways even the Herderian constructions were posing an “internal challenge” to the Enlightenment canon of philosophical anthropology. Some of the implications of these ideas reached the Eastern and other parts of Europe rather early, but the full blossoming of the local versions of the philosophy of cultural peculiarity is indeed connected to the Romantic discourse. Significantly, this period was marked by the emphatic appearance of the “folk” in the political discourse. While for Herder the *Volk*, rather than humanity, was the carrier of culture and progress, and the *Volksgeist* was found to cause all human values and understandings, his views of the organic, historically specific cultural-linguistic community was *not* political—it was indeed “anti-political, different from and even opposed to nationalism.”¹⁵ It was the Romantic revolutionaries with their expanding networks of followers across Europe who were primarily responsible for imbuing Herder’s valuation of membership in a group or a culture with political meaning. “You should have no joy or repose as long as a portion of the territory upon which your language is spoken is separated from the Nation,” Mazzini clamored for while prognosticating the rise of “The Countries of the People, defined by the voice of the free.”¹⁶ Along with the fully-fledged

14 As R. Suny and M. Kennedy maintain, “Nations in this modern sense could not exist before there was a discourse of the nation, that is, before there was an understanding, a language, and a practice of nationness in this modern sense.” Suny and Kennedy (1999), p. 394.

15 Berlin (2000), pp. 168–242.

16 Beales (1969), pp. 151–2.

appearance of this set of new themes, the first decades of the 19th century brought also the European “constructivist” re-evaluation of the archaic self and the new sense of historicity. Far from being unilinear, the interaction of the European margins and the core meant that some of these local lores became paradigmatic for the entire European circulation of ideas, such as the Nordic or Balkan epic traditions.

All these changes came to signify a new mainstream historical approach displaying the resurrection of a holist aspect in modernity. The argument of much national history since the 18th century is, to use Hayden White’s term, “organicism”: its strategy is “to see individual entities as components of processes which aggregate into wholes that are greater than, or qualitatively different from, the sum of their parts.”¹⁷ By engrafting holism on the main body of liberal individualism, the Romantic vision gave birth to spiritual collectivism. The outcome was a shift in the arrangement of cultures from being defined by their position “in time”—hence being thought of as more or less primitive or more or less civilized—to positioning them “in space,” where cultures become equal by virtue of their origin. Here was an undoubtedly modern, even revolutionary ideology destined to have a long political and intellectual career. In this way, while “exporting” the terminology and the underlying philosophical theories to these cultures, the European cultural mainstream integrated a number of East-European cultural contexts, describing them as peculiar *loci* of authenticity.

It was therefore a natural development that the local outcomes of this dialogue, the various versions of national liberalism, seeking political, social and cultural emancipation and Europeanization, were marked by the curious intertwining of the project of modernity with the project of conserving the specificity inherent in “folk culture.” The Romantic imagery of the folk thus infiltrated a wide range of modernist discourses throughout the 19th century and was frequently used to legitimate modernizing projects and reforms. For the East European nations, folk tradition and folk culture, as an embodiment of the specificity and vitality of “the people,” became a condition of modernity rather than an object of modernist extinction. A far-reaching and tenuous paradox thus emerged: the collective individuality of the people, mobilized for the emancipation of its historical being and admission into the modern world, could remain the same collective individuality only by “playing out” its original and a-historical specificity.

17 White (1973), p. 15.

What makes the study of the chosen traditions of political thinking particularly fascinating is that they can reveal the modalities in which the notions of the folk were able to fuse these contradictory claims. The question then arises: was there anything peculiar, locally distinctive, which sets the identity narratives in our region apart? The fruitful notion of “historical (meso)region,” we should be advised to keep in mind, is not free of a danger of smuggling essentialism back in, offsetting the boundaries but not the limitations of the national framework it aspires to outdo. Long before and at least for some time after 1989 nationalism was seen as the *differencia specifica* of and the gate-keeping concept for Southeastern Europe.¹⁸ But while in more recent years this tendency has been increasingly problematized, at least in the academe, the question of whether the regional nationalisms and discourses of identity display certain traits derived from a particular historical-cultural experience is still a vexed one.

Without embarking directly on it, the authors gathered in this volume propose some directions and insights in the quest for answers. Above all they rebut the Manichean division of national identities into good Western (civic, liberal-democratic, and universalistic) and bad Eastern (ethnic, antiliberal, and xenophobic), and of national discourses into “progressivist” (underlying universalist and activist agendas) and “conservative” (stressing continuity, organic development and tradition). Taking their cue from Hans Kohn’s influential mid-20th-century book, itself reverberating Friedrich Meinecke’s famed dualities, many scholars have partaken in the convention of construing both nationalism and the East-European political cultures in terms of binary oppositions.¹⁹ As it happens though, such professed counter-positions converged, and our regional canvas brings to the fore the different combinations in the process and the range of normatively “aberrant” options inherent in the national-Romantic discourse.

The Enlightenment quest for improvement and social solidarity had already posed the question of the boundaries of the community entitled to their exercise and, at least by implication, about the space of patriotism and, eventually,

18 For definitions of Southeastern Europe from various disciplinary viewpoints, see the special issue of *Balkanologie* 3 (2), 1999. For an overview of the debates on Southeastern Europe as a historical region, see Müller (2003), pp. 393–408.

19 Kohn (1955). For the sake of illustration, among many others, two otherwise rather divergent approaches to regional nationalisms, separated by a 30-year time span, those by Sugar and Lederer (1969), and Boia (2001, esp. pp. 33–34), appear as being of the same opinion on this point.

of nationhood. But the pre-existence or otherwise of institutional and ideological traditions, upon which that nationhood could be erected, mattered critically for the answers given. Whereas in the historically named countries of the European “core,” inadvertent nation making and the rise of the doctrine of popular sovereignty followed the creation of centralized “national states,” in Central and Eastern Europe the pressure towards defining the boundaries of the national community eroded the existing dynastic state frameworks through politicization of culture and the popular frameworks.²⁰ The inescapable antinomy of national determination—the impossibility of self-determining the identification and boundaries of the national self²¹—was an obvious institutional predicament. Ivor Jennings formulated it aptly: “on the surface it seemed reasonable: Let the People decide. It was in fact ridiculous because the people cannot decide until someone decides who are the people.”²² The national framework, furthermore, emerged as something which “had to be created, retrieved, wrested over and continuously safeguarded from not only the power instruments of the existent dynastic state framework but also the indifference of a part of one’s own population and the shakiness of national consciousness.”²³ This is what István Bibó bemoaned as the “misery of the small East European states,” with the implication that nation building in this part of Europe entailed first of all the “making of ethnic majorities” by creating normative national identities and winning over hesitant populations for the national idea before facing up to the task of acculturating ethnic minorities. It is this condition that made many national-liberal and radical movements in 19th-century East-Central Europe specially susceptible to more than just defining the nation in cultural terms. It made them link in one inextricable whole the “inner freedom,” that is democratic rule, and “outer liberation and unification,” that is the boundaries of the demos—in other words, the internal (civic) and the external (irredentist and ethnic) nationalism. Popular sovereignty and the national self stood out thereof as the two facets of a single meta-language—that of national-Romantic liberalism. It was this ideo-

20 On the distinction between the early-modern “national state,” which moved “unwittingly” towards administrative and socio-cultural integration of its diverse populations, and the modern “nation-state,” which deliberately pursues cultural homogenization, see Hall (1993); Mann (1986; 1993).

21 Brubaker (1998), p. 279. On the modern Eastern European discourses of collective identity, see Sugar (1995).

22 Jennings (1956), p. 56. Cf. Linz (1993), pp. 355–369.

23 Bibó (1986), p. 162.

logical concoction that shaped the normative core of Southeast-European modernity.²⁴ To be sure, the complementarity between civil society and cultural homogeneity was above all a pragmatic one since, as Locke had long before observed, a (limited) government built on the will of the people and civic equality required a culturally “consensual” polity.²⁵ In their exertions to validate their nation’s readiness for modernity, therefore, modernizers across Eastern Europe showed little reverence for distinguishing between the liberal and the Romantic, the universal and the particular, the politically modern and the antiquarian. What they had offered instead was a remarkable mixture of classical liberal and citizenship precepts, the language of nationalism, and Romantic celebration of tradition, thus legitimating their project as universal and rational, on the one hand, and local and patrimonial, on the other. The evocation of “we, the people” in the entitlement of this volume is intended to capture precisely that ambiguity and syncretism which rarely join to the analysis and the notion of (South)East-European nationalism.

MODALITIES OF NATIONAL SELF-DEFINITION BETWEEN POLITICS AND CULTURE

More than a few among our essays has set about exploring identity ideologems which emerged in two 19th-century imperial settings—the Ottoman and the Habsburg. Three of them focus on political constructions of identity variously classified as “imperial,” “a-national” or “supranational.” Generally speaking, the debates on the ideological core of these nationalisms can be approached from two angles: in terms of their avowed rationale and objectives, which often prove to be contingently conceived and incoherently formulated; or in view of the forces they had unwittingly unleashed and failed to control—i.e., in terms of their unintended logic. It is the frequent intermingling of these two dimensions that seems to be responsible for much contradictory assessment and contestation of the ideology and political practice of such supra-ethnic nationalisms.

A. Vezekov takes the first position as a vantage point for his analysis which sets forth to “understand the political project of the [Ottoman] leaders

24 For a comparative survey of 19th-century Serbian, Bulgarian, and Romanian liberal nationalisms, see Mishkova (2006), pp. 399–456.

25 Locke (1990) [1689]. In accord with his model of nationalism, Ernest Gellner (Gellner (1994), ch. 13) makes the same argument. Cf. Hayden (2002), pp. 205–231.

in its integrity” and proper context. For him, and contrary to the prevailing view of the post-Ottoman national historiographies, the political unity and identification with the Ottoman state, which the official “Ottomanist nationalism” pursued through modernizing legal and administrative reforms, was not a nation-making project. At best, that was a form of politically and administratively forged patriotism, combining traditional and modern elements, which was essentially ripped of ethnic and civic substance.²⁶ The author’s conceptual and contextual analysis points to the predicaments inherent in an imperial nationalism trying to fuse the legal precepts of enlightened citizenship, traditional identification with Islam, and an antidote to the increasingly assertive national claims of the non-Muslim elites of the empire. These predicaments had reflected above all in the incoherence and ambiguity as regards the meaning of Ottoman and the allegiances it was meant to induce—to the state and the dynasty, or to Islam and “Turkism”—but also in its limited and transient success.

The pre-1848 liberal project of the Transylvanian Romanians likewise pled for a multiethnic (Transylvanian) patriotism and a non-ethnic political nation. But the reasons for this apparent similarity, as K. Sata has shown, were of a different nature and can only be grasped if the competing political projects, the Hungarian and the Austrian, are taken into account. The justification and purpose behind the pre-1848 liberal and the Ottoman supra-national patriotisms diverged—a discrepancy exposed most clearly by their sharply contrasting understandings of popular sovereignty and representation. While Ottomanism, and Ottoman modernity generally, implied modern subjecthood made of fellow citizens (*vatanadaşlar*), who listened and obeyed rather than participated in the governance of the empire, the liberal Transylvanian Romanian project implied the political enfranchisement of not even individual, ethnically disparate citizens (as the Hungarian liberals demanded), but of legally sanctioned and politically represented ethnic communities (“corporate nations”). The ideological function of the former was the cultivation of a non-

26 As Selim Deringil—Deringil (1993), 166—put it, “The concept of ‘society’, much less ‘civil society’, did not really come into their frame of reference. The threat linking [the reign, 1808–1838, of] Mahmud II and Kemal Atatürk is precisely this obsession with the state.” To be sure, had Ottomanism been approached in terms of the processes it did not intend but helped to unleash (e.g., through the wider spread and relative opening of education or the expanding “application” of Turkism in the Ottomanist language of the “intellectual bureaucrats”), one could discover a series of linkages between Turkish nationalism and the period of Ottoman “reordering” known as the *Tanzimat*.

national “constitutional patriotism,” or social solidarity, divested of any notion of popular political participation; that of the latter—a mediated political education of the different ethnic communities in the exercise of their legitimate sovereign rights. In the light of this cardinal divergence, the patriotic Ottomanist agenda appears to be much more similar to Austrian state patriotism, whereas the Transylvanian liberal followers of George Bariț turn out to share far more with the “Turcophile” nationalists among the Bulgarian subjects of the sultan or with the movement of the Young Ottomans.

With this backdrop, the peculiarities of the incipient Macedonian “supranationalism” several decades later become even more trenchant. T. Marinov maps the multitude of “identity options” that were laid open to the Macedonian nationalists and the variety of “mixed solutions” adopted: from a contingently inspired political separatism with a loose Bulgarian and Macedonian ethnic complexion, as it was espoused by the various national-revolutionary organizations, to the idiosyncratic fusion of internationalist, a-national, and ethnic Macedonian ingredients in the ideology of the Macedonian socialists. Muddling through this diversity induces Marinov to take on board Fredrik Barth’s proposition to view the patterns of self-identification as “to a large extent the contingent result of a specific interaction within a particular setting.” This contextual, circumstantial and interactive approach makes it possible for him to unveil the mechanisms which had triggered the noted discursive pluralism and dynamism and spurred the increasing ethnicization of what hitherto had been an essentially political program.²⁷

These three case studies thus exemplify three different kinds of supranational identity politics raising interesting questions about their similarities and differences. The heuristic benefit of bringing them together is precisely that, on the one hand, this operation makes us aware of crucial dimensions inherent to the studied phenomena which tend to remain hidden when scrutinized in isolation. On the other, it sensitizes us to the variety of non-ethnic nationalisms, even within a single imperial setting, and to the methodological equipment required to make sense of this variety, which considerably complicates the picture imparted by conventional taxonomies. The three studies also lay bare a number of paradoxes in the political constructions of identity that tra-

27 Rogers Brubaker’s notion of “relational *field of differentiated and competing positions or stances* adopted by different organizations, parties, movements, or individual political entrepreneurs..., each seeking to monopolize the legitimate representation of the group” (where “field” is employed in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu), is also appropriate in the Macedonian case (Brubaker [1996], pp. 61, 68–69, italics in the original).

ditional national historiographies, predictably, fail to come to terms with. Read together they underscore the existence of vital areas of overlapping and complementarity between warring political and nationalist agendas. The relational character of the Romanian and the Hungarian nationalisms in Transylvania—indeed the constitutive impact of the interaction between them on almost every aspect of their ideological makeup—has been compellingly borne out by K. Sata. It was in effect exactly the pre-modern Hungarian understanding of political nationhood that formatted the early Romanian project in a corporatist direction. Having emerged largely in response to the rising nationalist discourses, the official Ottomanist ideology, in both its vocabulary and politics, mirrored their subversive messages. But Ottomanism too proved able to exert a reverse, allegedly less “natural,” impact on the nationalist ideologies in the region. T. Marinov’s essay offers ample evidence of this type of transfer by outlining the broad intersection zone between the Ottomanist patriotic discourse and the supra-national code of the Macedonian revolutionary ideology. A considerable section among the Bulgarian nationalists and Macedonian autonomists, furthermore, deemed it perfectly plausible to combine “two patriotisms”—an a-national imperial and a nationalist one. The Transylvanian Romanian liberals too proved fully capable to harmonize their staunch imperial (and Transylvanian) patriotism upholding the territorial and great-power integrity of the multinational Austrian empire, with a Romanian ethno-cultural identity projecting a rather disparate national geography. As in the case of Macedonian autonomism, the political and the cultural Romanian nationalisms split ways and, before a series of contingencies took place, did not set on the road to convergence.

While the studies discussed thus far concentrate on the elements via which a modern political community in an empire was defined and, by extension, on the structure and consistency of multiethnic identity, those under Part III touch upon this same problematique in the perspective of personal subjectivity and consciousness. Shemseddin Sami Frashëri, an Ottomanist reformer and a canonizer of two competing national projects—the Albanian and the Turkish—is a conspicuous embodiment of the purportedly incompatible blending of imperial and not even one but two ethno-nationalisms. For Sami, dynastic loyalty was the hallmark of membership in the Ottoman multiethnic and multireligious state community to whose modernization he was as committed as the leading statesmen-intellectuals of the *Tanzimat* era. But the dominant element in that state, he argued in what was later praised as a major breakthrough of modern Turkish nationalism, were neither the Ottomans nor the Muslims but the “Turks”—a bigger and older cultural community (older

than Islam itself), far outstretching the realms of the sultan. Not without similarity to George Bariț, the intellectual guide of the pre-1848 Romanian liberals in Habsburg Transylvania, Sami could unproblematically fuse a political loyalty to the empire and an ethno-national Pan-Turkism, which, as B. Bilmez has demonstrated, were in many respects antithetical. But there was yet another “we” on behalf of which Sami spoke, with greatest eloquence at that: the assertively ethno-cultural Albanianism whose political implications he formulated much more clearly and strongly than when musing over ethnic “Turkishness.” Tellingly, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, a leading liberal-Romantic intellectual operating at that same time in another imperial context on behalf of a “minority” national cause, that of the Habsburg Serbs, presented an akin case of “dual self-identification”: a fervent fighter for the Serbs’ cultural awakening and autonomy rights in the Dual Monarchy, Zmaj eschewed exclusivist and irredentist agendas and, albeit often criticizing the politics of Magyarization, remained loyal to his native Hungarian “homeland.” It is hardly surprising that national historiographies tend to suppress evidence of such controversial stances, especially when figures of the national pantheon, such as those highlighted in this volume, are involved. Yet, personifying the interpenetration of different worlds as they did, these figures were no accident of history. Casting light on the phenomena they came to epitomise may teach us, in the very least, to be less amenable to the deceptive coherence of historical teleology.

Even so, the tendency towards “ethnicizing the political” was latent in, or ran parallel to, all those supranational discourses and, however diverse the thrusts behind its escalation in the different contexts, by the turn of the century it had everywhere prevailed. In fact, rather than weakening ethnic and separatist movements, the a-national projects tended to stimulate them. Remarkably, nationalists of rather different formats, such as the Bulgarian revolutionaries and the “loyalist” Albanian nation-builders like Shemseddin Sami Frashëri, agreed that the modernizing *Tanzimat* reforms had posed their respective ethnic communities under severe threat. The bulk of the 1830s–1860s generations of Southeast-European nationalists were the heirs, not of the 18th-century programs of national regeneration through political reform, but of those figures standing at the threshold of two paradigms, like Herder and Fichte, who fused a reverence for ethnic culture and tradition with a project of progress and enlightenment and in the process transformed the understanding of what community and patriotism were about. The studies of B. Trencsényi and D. Lilova throw a bridge to another register of nation-making resources—one that was contemporary to the patriotic Ottoman and liberal Transylvanian discourses but which drew upon the immanent culture and historicity of the

community. For all these cultures the 1830s emerge as a watershed marked by the simultaneous upsurge of new means of social communication and crystallization of the liberal-Romantic canon of identity.

A common *topos* of this new national discourse, as it surfaced among the Romanians and the Bulgarians in the first half of the century, was the transitory state, or mixed makeup, of the nation between barbarity and civilization. This taxonomy, and the barbarian stereotype of Bulgarian identity, Lilova tells us, was applied to all spheres of Bulgarian self-description (including history and folklore!), systematically perpetuated by the new “alphabet” of modernity, and thus stabilized as “the main framework in which the nation builds its identity.” Significantly, it was the nationalizing Bulgarian elite that was diligently engrafting the stigma of “primitiveness” onto the national imagination and postulating the deficit of “national culture” as the primary disqualifier of civilization.

This striking divergence from the conventional, Romantic myth-based representation of East-European nationalism deserves some attention. One can think of instances from almost any country in the region where self-stigmatization had been employed, by 18th-century reformers and 19th-century liberal nationalists alike, less as a confession of inferiority than as a political stratagem with an emphatically didactic purpose: to spotlight the ailing condition of their home environment, spur their “idle” readers to change (mostly through education), and awake them to the imperative of “patriotic improvement.” Let it be recalled that such was the strategy of the *philosophes* themselves when carping the deplorable state of their own societies and pointing to the “unheard-of progress” of Russia by virtue of its enlightened ruler, who had turned their gospel into reality. Several decades before the Bulgarian debates took off, the Serb arch-enlightener Dositej Obradović intimated this “functionality of self-stigmatization” in a characteristically instructive message, historicizing (Western) Europe’s own entitlement to civilization: “If Europeans had not dared to correct their thoughts and enlighten their minds with reason, they would remain until today in their aboriginal stupidity and barbarism, and would be like the wretched peoples of Africa. [...] All nations which merely cling to old opinions and customs must lie in eternal and hopeless darkness and stupidity, like all the nations of Asia and Africa.”²⁸ As Lilova’s enquiry seems to suggest, the stigma of “self-barbarization” was a perfectly justified political strategy in terms of the modernizing reform agenda: by

28 Noyes (1953), pp. 147, 211.

dramatizing absences and contrasts with “civilized Europe,” to shake the nation out of its complacency and give weight to the liberal-national programs about what ought to be done to redress its dismal condition.²⁹ That meant in effect domesticating the Enlightenment civilization-barbarity discourse and projecting the *mission civilisatrice* onto one’s own population.³⁰

For many liberal-Romantic treatises on the Romanian “national character” the collective self-denunciation in cultural dearth was a distinguishing framework as well. But there it was largely overlaid by what B. Trencsényi calls the “hermeneutic circularity” of ethno-pedagogy—educating the people by confronting them with their past. This strategy of extracting the norms of modernity from the people’s “hidden self” which then is employed to reconstruct its “outer self” and, in the process, indigenize the essential attributes of civilization of which the West was so proud, was not a rare liberal practice either. As an eminent student of 19th-century Serbia had observed, the Serbian liberals, having discovered little foundation for “Western-type” modernity in their contemporary society, turned to national history to “search for the rudiments of the Western liberal institutions [presenting] our whole democratic movement as the return of our people to its historical character.”³¹

In the end all these narratives of national development were animated by the universalist vision of irreversible progress. In 19th-century Southeastern Europe, national ideologies were produced and utilized within a modernity-confident framework of thinking and action, whose ontological fundament was the progress-prone community. Far from celebrating a return to the a-historical organic, the national community of the liberal-Romantic era validated its *Geist* by essentializing and historicizing its propensity to progress. That current proved powerful enough to engulf not only the Christian aspirants to Europeaness but also the Ottoman westernizers, whose notions of modernity were predicated on the modern cultural distinctiveness of Islam and for whom “the logic of Ottoman nationalism was not to perform politics

29 For the similar assignment of a number of East European travelogues on Western Europe, see Bracewell (2008).

30 Towards the end of the century a similar process, which Eugen Weber defined as “akin to colonization,” came to characterize the relations between the (“modern”) metropolitan centre and the (“primitive”) rural peripheries in the countries of the “core” such as England and France. As the social reformer William Boost poignantly framed it in 1890, “As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England?” Weber (1976), p. 486; Keating (1976), p. 145; cf. Hechter (1974).

31 Jovanović, (1934), I, p. 44. For a discussion of the national ideology and identity discourse of the 19th-century Serbian liberals, see Mishkova (2006), pp. 404–414.

within the parameters of a foundational moment but to surpass it, to move away urgently from it, and to rise above it.”³²

But since progress was also seen as imposed from outside and a threat to the national organic, a clash emerged, and with time acerbated, between those who called for wholesale “import of civilization” and those who self-styled themselves as custodians of local tradition.³³ The real challenge from the point of view of the nation-builders, in other words, was how, at the backdrop of major historic ruptures, to conceive of national cohesion and “regenerate” the national community on behalf of values which were not of the community’s making. Remarkably, the bulk of actual ideological solutions to this problem selectively blended rather than replicated the two opposing positions by offering various recipes of regulated progress and variedly balanced mixtures of Western “import” and national “authenticity.” The result was a broad array of narratives seeking to reconcile modernity and archaism, foreign models and local traditions, the universal and the particular.

Several of the contributions herein underpin this diversity of framing national progress and national self, conveying the breadth and complexity of existing modalities. Some highlight the paradoxical interweaving of normative history, locating the locus of national purity and dignity in the ancient past, and the meta-political language of irrevocable progress. In the radical-democratic thought of Nicolae Bălcescu, the leading ideologist of the Romanian 1848, the a-historicity and resilience of the Romanian peasant culture was what made it a repository of the Romanian national character and a source for national regeneration. In a similar vein, both the Ottoman “ethnic awakener” Shemseddin Sami and the Albanian “critical nationalist” Faik Konitza saw the “savage” and archaic Albanian mountaineer, living his centuries-long secluded life untouched by “knowledge, civilization and trade,” as the incarnation of Albanian authenticity and stronghold of Albanian “language and nationality.” All those national canon-builders juxtaposed past heroic glory, military valor and Golden Age to the dismal corrupted present, brought about by foreign influences and inauthentic interventions. At the same time all of them, despite their otherwise divergent ideological convictions and political agendas, envisioned national history and identity within a vigorously evolutionist, sometimes stadial theory of progress, whose providential fulfilment was crowned by the (“emancipated,” “unified,” “civilized”) nation’s state.

32 Makdisi (2002), p. 782.

33 For a comparative treatment of the regional elites’ discourses along such lines, see Höpken (1996), pp. 91–108.

Their concepts were thus, to borrow A. Puto's characterization of Konitz's outlook, at once "evolutionary, organic and historicist."

The exploration of the economic facets of national individuality complements the national-characterological perspective to this phenomenon. The "national system of economy," as elaborated by the German liberal economist Friedrich List,³⁴ appears to have been as attractive to liberal nationalists as it was to statist imperial reformers in the two empires. It was evoked by the specter of a common threat—the imperialism of the economically powerful, and came up with a common solution to it—a state-protected domestic industry and trade. The Bulgarian debate on the railroads, however, signaled a major breach in the original theory: while, in the 1830s–1840s, List had zealously pioneered railway construction, seeing it as a major integrative force in social, cultural and economic sense (and railway stations became national symbols in Germany), for the Bulgarian nationalists of the 1870s, railroads spelled the danger of colonizing the empire and, with it, of eliminating any chance for national prosperity. Nevertheless, the theory's bottom-line—the logic of "economic nationalism"—remained intact. Lilova makes a strong case in favor of the essentially modernist ("anti-European but not counter-modern") stance of the Bulgarian nationalizing elite in this matter—one of the great many examples of the quest to strike a balance between the requisites of (imported) progress and the safeguarding of the national. Similar to the choice of August Schlözer, not Herder, as the godfather of the Bulgarians' "historical sense," this premeditated departure from another influential theory underscores the decisive role of a recipient peripheral culture in selecting, interpreting and utilizing the Western intellectual import.

In all these contexts assertions of historical continuity and providentialist visions appear to have enfolded within a fundamentally modernist consensus. The linkage between social regeneration (or "social revolution"), modernization ("progressive development") and nationalism ("national unity" and a viable nation-state) was a generic one across the region during its liberal phase. The national-Romantic idiom itself came to signify the fusion of pre-existent, traditional forms of social organization and self-government with the notions of modernity and progress. Political modernity in Southeastern Europe was, as a matter of fact, in a large measure the outcome of this fusion.

The taxonomies of modernity, and the ideological reactions they had generated, deserve the attention they have received from the contributors for one

34 List (1904) [German Edition 1841].

more reason: they help us historicize the much-debated question of stigmatized identity. There is a sufficient amount of regional testimonies of inferiority consciousness *vis-à-vis* a putative Western (occasionally neighboring) standard since at least the early 18th century. For most of the 19th century, however, this inferiority presented itself not as an ontological but as a “temporal” problem, one of degree rather than of kind, failing (as yet) to produce distress of inauthenticity, “split consciousness” or “collective crisis of identity.”³⁵ The linear-evolutionary, progressivist visions of the kind exemplified by oppositions like “barbarians vs. civilized” or “ancient purity vs. corrupted present” were the ones that dominated the historicist discourses about the civilizational trajectory of the nation. The ultimate pedagogic thrust of such binary oppositions was vitally hooked to the idea of benevolent evolution and swift civilizing process, provided “reasonable” politics (and all politics were seen as an exercise in education) were employed. In general, the national discourses in their 19th-century versions, either liberal or social-radical or conservative, were deeply rooted in a pervasive linear-progressivist, teleological vision of history.

The historicizing of identity along such vision reveals an important dimension. The universalizing of time and progress, as espoused by the European “center,” does not appear as having produced solely “absences” and inferiority in the “periphery.” It could also operate as a strong mobilizing and emancipating force. Translating the modernization gap between the West and the non-West into a mere difference in time implied a possibility for emancipation of non-Western history. The laggards were not doomed to an eternal subaltern position, “all nations could count on their own modernity, the differences being reduced to a matter of arriving ‘early’ or ‘late’.”³⁶ At the hands of Western colonialists this “denial of co-evalness” may have served as an “ideologically constructed instrument of power” justifying the “white man’s mission”³⁷—an instrument derived as much from claims to moral authority as from economics. At the hands of the East-European “modernizers” and nationalists, be they Ottoman reformers, Albanian or Bulgarian secessionists, it acquired a different twist and was made to serve different ends—such as targeted the “civilizing” of their own populations. (Due to their conspicuous “omission”

35 For an argument along similar lines, see Drace-Francis (2005), pp. 24–53 and Bracewell (2008), pp. 103–105. As these authors indicate, the literature on the (South)East-European identities abounds with notions of “identity crisis,” “cultural dualism” or “cultural schizophrenia,” often conceived in a post-colonial key and a-historic manner. Cf. Young (1990).

36 S. Conrad, (1999), p. 73.

37 See in this sense Fabian (1983), pp. 144–147.

from the course of European development, the Bulgarians exemplified these tendencies in a more accentuated way. Their response was the construction of a vehemently evolutionist narrative of national development whereby they could historicize but also relativize their backwardness). Here was a clear case not of importing but of appropriating the Western discourse on development through a strategy that Sebastian Conrad called “temporalization of space”—transforming economic and political differences between East and West into a lag in time along a universal path of development. The characteristic enlightenment credo—that all people and nations are the same but that good institutions make good peoples, while bad institutions corrupt them—was of course part and parcel of this worldview. For the better part of the 19th century this progressivist construal and the attendant drive at Europeanization proved remarkably resilient in the face of various Romanticist currents and politico-ideological cleavages. After about the 1860s things began to change—and several of the papers in this volume suggest why and how they did. But it is precisely the diachronic approach that allows us to grasp the significant dynamism of, and obviate static conclusions about, identity formation and identity politics in the region.

MULTIPLE NATIONHOODS: SOURCES OF DIVERGENCE AND PATTERNS OF CONTENTION

As the political-multiethnic and the liberal-Romantic projects should have suggested, the representations of the national possessed none of the stability and coherence that national historiographic and literary canons tend to *ex post* assign to them. Rather than being defined by presumed continuities, they are better thought of as battlefields of permanent contestation, struggle and negotiation. Both within and outside the Romantic nationalist mainstream there emerged divergent “national pasts” and “national essences” to support different political projects (liberal, democratic, conservative, or socialist); to underscore different religious distinctions (Greek-Orthodox, Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Protestant, or Muslim, a-religious or pantheistic); to frame different political geographies (nation-statist, irredentist or (con)federalist). The case studies in this volume look into the ways in which normative discourses of the national self, historical narratives and political projects permeated and shaped each other, underscoring the close connection between alternative pasts, cultural self-definitions and modernities. Several major contextual elements eventuated the variety of scenarios.

The social resources for articulating the nation, or the fit between class and ethnies, could vary significantly across our disparate environments. Thus the Romanian version of liberal nationalism, which devoured its social radicalism after the unification of the two Danubian principalities, differed considerably from the ethno-populist (*narodnik*) version endorsed by the Serbian and the Bulgarian political elites and epitomized by intellectuals such as Jovan Jovanović Zmaj. Nevertheless, the image of the peasantry as the embodiment of national authenticity, and of peasant culture as the cohesive material binding together the national community, was a common one. It had two sources. The peasant ideology of Romanticism was one of them, and it cut across the liberal-conservative spectrum—a situation that explains the central function assigned to folklore. The other was the massive predominance of the rural population in these societies which, among other things, conferred social respectability to both left-agrarianist and conservative-organicist sociological theories. While nation-states and their institutions were pressing to align the rural “substance” with the imported “forms” by transforming peasants into national subjects, “newborn citizens were being construed as ‘ideological peasants’, ‘as the subjects of a national myth-system incorporating and forever reproducing the primary ingredients of rurality, blood and soil’.”³⁸ Clearly, peasants and peasant culture lent themselves to various, sometimes opposing representations of national personality, and the “people” received no consensual location in the march of progress. B. Trencsényi’s map of the various Romanian conceptions in this respect can be seen, *mutatis mutandis*, as a blueprint for the rest of the region.

Obviously, the politico-institutional environment of the different “national revivals” was in many respects vital in shaping the content of the individual national projects. It mattered greatly whether the program of national “awakening” was taking place in the framework of a sovereign state (Greece), a quasi-state (the Serbian and the two Romanian principalities), or imperial structures (as in the case of the Bulgarian, the Albanian, and the Macedonian “awakenings”). On this point our volume does not posit a duality between (the subjective role of) human agency and (the objective one of) social or geopolitical history, but concurs with the view that both the particular conjecture and the strategies and resources which were available for transformation define any actor or institutional agency’s ability to reconstruct preexistent dis-

38 Peckham (2004), p. 41. See Nairn (1998), pp. 107–134.

courses in a new way.³⁹ In environments such as the Albanian or the Macedonian, where the legal and institutional means of defining the national were least favorable for doing so in terms of political legitimacy and citizenship, identity drifted heavily towards “non-political” markers such as history, language and religion. In both those cases references to the political dimensions of national organics and agencies of the people’s will, such as popular representation and its institutions, were conspicuously absent. In certain settings the relative weight of political “events” was paramount. The Macedonian search for national peculiarity perhaps best exemplifies the implications, elucidated by Marinov, of the transnational (geo)political dynamics. The vicissitudes of the so-called “Eastern question” proved similarly decisive for both the demise of the Bulgarians’ “bucolic identity” and the rise of the Albanian ethno-political projects, as did the Romanian-Hungarian conflagration of 1848 in sealing the fate of a Transylvanian supra-national *patria*.

The variety of cultural mediators (French, German, Italian, Russian) produced different “Enlightenments,” thence different “national Romanticisms,” whereby different “universalisms” came to compete, and often fight, with each other. The notion of intellectual transfer is, in this particular respect, most pertinent. It helps us to understand not only the processes of professionalization and institutionalization of sciences, which are the object of exploration of the essays in Part II, or the local preeminence of certain schools of thought, paradigms, and concepts. It is just as useful in allowing us to contextualize the genealogy of competing notions of modern government and society. The intellectual connections to France and Germany, for example, often entailed rival political models and institutional arrangements—e.g., republicanism vs. monarchism, social revolution vs. organic evolution, liberalism vs. socialism. From among the intellectual contexts explored here, the Romanian displays most graphically these correlations by juxtaposing the French lineage of the liberal-Romantic *pașoptist* movement and the German one of the organicist liberal-conservative *Junimea*. But the two main narratives within the national-liberal framework—the revolutionary and the evolutionary, had counterparts in and shared a number of common themes across most of the cultures in the region, validating conflicting political agendas.

Within the array of contextual sources for differing self-projections in space and time regional or religious cleavages play a pivotal role. The distinct Wallachian, Moldavian and Transylvanian cultural-political narratives in the case of

39 Cf. Suny and Kennedy (1999), p. 398.

(what later became greater) Romania, or the denominational opposition between Greek Catholics and Orthodox in Transylvania easily come to mind. L. Szabó's essay traces the ways in which such regional differences translated, through the medium of the rising ethnographic science, into struggling versions of the national—the Budapest-based Hungarian ethnographic society and museum eclectically mixing the supra-national (imperial) and ethnic concepts of the national, the Transylvania-based ones shoring up an exclusivist ethnic framework for the Hungarian nation-making project centered on the unifying role of ethnography. Also revealing in this sense is the constitution of the Albanian national ideology, where long-standing religious and regional differences were mainly responsible for the emergence of, and the severe competition between, rival identity constructions. The studies of B. Bilmez and A. Puto provide a diachronic perspective to this phenomenon, allowing us to grasp also the dynamics in the process of politicization of religion that came to characterize the late 19th-century nationalist policies and discourses. For the first generation of Albanian cultural awakeners, such as Sami Frashëri, it proved relatively easy to dispense with religious differences and pursue the dictum of one of their ranks that "the religion of the Albanians is Albanianness" defined in terms of blood, language and customs. For the turn-of-the-century nationalist generation of the empire—Albanian, Turkish, or Macedonian—that was no longer an available option. Since the mid-19th century there had been a clear tendency of accentuating the political implications of religion in a modernity framework. Despite the acknowledged existence of four distinct confessional groups among the would-be Albanian ethnic community, the budding Albanian ethno-political nationalism was not predicated on the abandonment of religion. Even those who, like Faik Konitza, discarded religion as a force of unity, felt compelled to take a stance on the relationship between confessional and national identities. In a period of rising popular mobilization and crisis of legitimacy, they saw themselves obliged to address each confessional group and take into account, or instrumentalize, religious sensibilities. Generally speaking, two basic solutions presented themselves to the Albanian nation makers. One was to construct an abstract community based on the monotheistic faith in the singularity of God or, alternatively, on an entirely original religion—that of the Pelasgians; the other, to conceive of Albanian identity as intrinsically multi-confessional, in which case each of the four confessions would have been entitled to "Albanization."⁴⁰ Both of these solutions were tried,

40 For an illuminating study of the multiple identity constructions at the interface of religious/regional and national identities along these lines, see Clayer (2007).

none with overriding success, leaving their mark in the form of a strikingly large variety of constructions of the dominant discourse on the Albanianess.

Digging for its premise, A. Puto's study refers to one more source of discursive divergences: the differential presentations of the nation at home and abroad. Frequently provoked by foreign descriptions of Albanian religious dividedness and fanaticism, the discourse to the outside asserted the Albanians' a-religiosity—their fundamental indifference and tolerance in confessional matters—and inherent cohesion. The elements underscoring commonality were omnipresent in the discourse addressed to the Albanians as well, however, in this case religious differences were didactically stigmatized and a series of radical cures proposed. The interesting outcome of this "double-speak" is that, however contingent its original intentions and powerful the contention by other scenarios, the myth of the "religious indifference," as Puto points out, "remains among the most resilient ideological constructs that still inform Albanian studies."

The exertions of the Serbian "people's poet," Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, in conceiving a "Serbo-Croatian people"—yet another testimony of the plurality of nationhoods, in this case confronting the dominant identity politics among the Serbs and the Croats—were motivated by an analogous quest for political unity based on language rather than on religion or history. However, the actual stake of his and other national liberals' rampant anti-clericalism was the fight, not for a secular state, but for control over the powerful Serbian Church in the Monarchy, elimination of its political authority, and converting it into a "national institution." Yet, the long-term consequences of subordinating religious commitments to national politics, as the Albanian nation making also suggests, were not necessarily in agreement with the actual intentions of their "enlightened" architects. As B. Aleksov argues, instead of separating confession and state, the ultimate nationalization of the Serbian Church bolstered the identification of Church and nation so that "a century later Serbian nationalism is much more clericalist whereas belonging to Orthodoxy and especially the institution of the Serbian Orthodox Church make up the core of self identification."

In the last analysis, the specific makeup and direction of the discrete national ideologies depended on the relative success or failure of a given nation-building project. (Similar argument can be made, by the way, with respect to the whole Southeast-European region *vis-à-vis* other peripheral regions in Europe, Scandinavia for example). From around the 1860s–1870s, the hitherto optimistic, progressivist worldview, ingeniously combining Romantic identity visions, evolutionary historicism and Western imports, began to crack

in the face of a new, critical cultural-political discourse. The challenge was not external to the national-liberal paradigm itself. As the above discussion should have shown, the nexus between the local and the universal, or nationalism and Europeanization, was anything but free of tension, and many 19th-century nationalists were deeply concerned with the deleterious effects of Western ideas and institutions on the organic national culture. The top-down enforcement of the modern “codes” unleashed sweeping dislocation of traditional structures and modes of social (self-)ascription, which brought up a series of critical questions concerning the identity of the community. On the one hand, it led to “misplaced” forms and veritable mutants of the Western civilizational framework. On the other, it spelled a growing alienation between nation-building elites and rural “peoples” and raised the question of the available modes of incorporating the latter in the national high culture. Thus the binding of the political and cultural programs of nation-statehood with the question of the “national essence” was also a consequence of the ideological and institutional import of political modernity. The paradox, again, was that the very concept of organicity or authenticity which underlay the new critical attitude had non-indigenous origin, and its validity could only be trans-nationally established.

These local trends were vitally linked to important shifts on European scale which were gathering momentum in the course of the second half of the century. A major structural transmutation, which by the end of the 19th century had become increasingly visible, was the expansion of the role of the state in almost every aspect of national life. This trend was consistent with the transformation which political liberalism was undergoing, as signaled by L.T. Hobhouse in 1911, in that it “was now reaching its apotheosis by aligning itself with the development of a newly emergent social rationality, embodied in an integrated and organic society and regulated by a benevolent and emphatically non-neutral agency—the state.”⁴¹ In the countries of the European core this transformation was primarily the result of the quest for balance between individualism and social interdependence in the face of strong corporatist movements. In the East-European periphery, the reconfiguration of the role of the state was closely related not only to the forcefully etatist modes of nation building but also to a new ideological shift.

In most of the countries in the region the period from around the 1860s–1870s onwards was marked by re-evaluation of the liberal-nationalist tradition

41 Freedden (2005), p. 21.

and the emergence of a post-Romantic anti-liberal nationalism. Again, this trend was concurrent with and reinforced by broader changes in the European intellectual milieu. The economic depression of 1873 to 1896 conjoined with what some historians have dubbed, variably, cultural crisis, intellectual revolution or a wave of “cultural despair.”⁴² While modernism in art came to interrogate what Burckhardt called “the culture of old Europe,” that in the human sciences “questioned and subverted Enlightenment ideas of reason, history, philosophy, and mastery of nature and society—and in this way perhaps the meaning of history itself.”⁴³ Currents of thought that emphasized non-rationalism and vitalist ideas as well as holistic and organic concepts drawing upon biological analogies gained a vogue. Ferdinand Tönnies’ dichotomy of “community” and “society,” Friedrich Nietzsche’s critique of rationalist modernity and canons of truths, and Social Darwinism held sway over intellectual and scientific milieus far beyond Southeastern Europe. The paradigm of *Völk-erpsychologie* or *psychologie des peuples* relating the individual-psychological categories to the characteristics of the ethno-cultural community was also a product of new research in anthropology and social psychology. Underpinned by positivism, it accentuated human differences and promoted relativist attitudes.

The resonance and impact of these currents in our region reveal certain peculiarities with roots in the previous, national-Romantic phase of state-building. In its cultural and institutional dimensions the question of the “national essence” was grappled with both political and scientific means. Under the auspices of the nation-building project there emerged, in the course of the latter half of the century, the “national sciences” aimed at systematizing and institutionalizing the knowledge of different aspects of national life (folklore, history, archaeology, ethnography, geography). In this configuration, the Romantic understanding of the national community not only proved capable to withstand the positivist direction of the turn-of-the-century intellectual environment. Indeed, while infusing scientific status into the study of society, positivism became a major vehicle for the institutionalization of the Romantic narrative and the nationalization of science.

The Romanian anti-Romantic *Junimea* movement, which B. Trencsényi explores at some length, epitomizes this “critical turn” that, from around the last third of the century, began to encroach upon the intellectual landscape

42 See for example Sternhell (1978); Stern (1963).

43 Kelley (2006), p. 6.

in various countries in the region. Common to its various national manifestations were two parallel developments: an attack against the national-Romantic symbiosis between liberalism and nationalism and a new organicist understanding of nationality. Taking their cue from the reputable biological theories of the time and the critical method of positivism, the *Juni-mists* developed a social-scientific approach to society which was intended to offset what they considered to be the major liberal-Romantic “accomplishment”—the loss of continuity with the past and social alienation. It focused on redefining the notions of national progress, tradition, and “essence” along naturalist and organicist lines and on the need for new “national sciences.” For the most of the 19th century the contradictory articulations of the national ideology—those pursuing a European finality and those rebuking Western civilization—co-existed. After 1900 the disparate manifestations of anti-liberal ethno-nationalism came together in an expanding ideological constellation centered on appeals to continuity, idealization of the peasantry as the living canon of national character, and ethnic interpretation of social history.⁴⁴ Significantly, these trends emanated both from the organicist-conservative critique (Mihai Eminescu) and within the Romantic-liberal paradigm (Bogdan Haşdeu). Westernized visions of national fulfillment gave way to autochthonist ones.

Putting the papers of Sata, Vezenkov, Trencsényi and Marinov in a continuum allows us to grasp the scale of the transformation which the cultural-political discourses tackling the relationship between civic (or modern state-building) and ethno-cultural markers of identity had undergone between the beginning and the end of the 19th century. They can also be seen as charting, with considerable overlapping rather than in neat succession, the prevailing paradigms of conceiving the national during that century: late-Enlightenment, national-liberal, national-conservative, and ethnic supra-nationalism. The reinterpretation of Ottomanism was perhaps the most radical. Across one century, several profound shifts in the meaning of Ottoman took place: from the old regime meaning of an imperial elite based on a sustained distance and difference between sultan and subjects and completely ignoring the common “Turk,” to a secular *Tanzimat* legal citizenship and official discourse of patriotic *Osmanlılık* including all Ottoman subjects, to a more ambiguous, more Romantic, more exclusivist late-Ottoman meaning that ennobled the “Turk” and reflected in the rise of a specifically *Turkish* sensibility as the dominant

44 See also Boia (2001), pp. 59–63.

element of a Westernized Islamic Ottoman nationalism.⁴⁵ In a way, Shemseddin Sami Frashëri's *oeuvre* merges all those metamorphoses of Ottomanness while underscoring the movement away from the inclusive ideology and policies of Ottomanism and Islamism towards an increasingly "Turkish" definition. A. Puto's exploration into the political thought of Faik Konitza makes it possible to assess the noted transformation diachronically. It allows us to, on the one hand, register the change that the Albanian national ideology had undergone since the (Ottomanist) generation of Sami and, on the other, discern the characteristics of the "critical turn" in an intellectual and institutional milieu considerably different from the Romanian. Konitza appears as typifying precisely that symbiosis between post-Romantic critical outlook, positivist "realism" and "neo-Romantic" historicist approach that came to characterize other regional discourses as well.

Similar to the Romanian, the Bulgarian national ideology around the turn of the century was marked by the emergence of an "evolutionary-organicist" discourse that questioned the liberal-Romantic heritage. The above-discussed "deviation" in the interpretation of the Listian political economy can be seen in the light of this transformation. At its backdrop the Bulgarian debate on the railroads of the 1870s, in particular what Lilova defines as a switch "from the regime of the utopia into the regime of the market," appears as an early sign of counter-reaction against the confident economic liberalism prevailing in the first half of the century, in Habsburg Transylvania included. From a different angle—one that sheds light on the employments of the notion of race in the turn-of-the-century Bulgarian national discourse—S. Detchev's essay suggests the scale of departure from the earlier liberal-Romantic canon with its roots in the Enlightenment tradition. The Herderian understanding of a people, let it be reminded, implied awareness of shared culture and social milieu (transmitted by language), not a biological or racial unity; a nation for Herder was made by "changeable and empirical factors, and not by an impalpable inner essence or an unalterable factor such as race or color."⁴⁶ Yet, according to Detchev, certain latent racial elements, such as the implicit connection between language and blood, were already discernible in Romanticism and lay ready at hand for more organicist or racist reformulations. Thus the post-Romantic turn of the second half of the century tied together "language" and

45 Makdisi (2002). Kemal Karpat (Karpat, 2001) makes the further distinction between a Romantic rediscovery of a common Turkish ethnic identity or "Turkishness" (*Türklük*) between 1839 and 1908, and the rise of Turkish statist political nationalism or "Turkism" (*Türkcülük*).

46 Berlin (2000), pp. 186; see also pp. 179–188, 206–208.

“race” whereby, as Puto’s analysis demonstrates, the notion of “natural languages” intermingled with “racial typologies.” (It is significant to note in this sense Faik Konitza’s plea for a “new organ,” i.e., language, to fit the “new [unified] body” of the nation). The deterministic theories of racial and cultural evolution boosted the tendency of using “nation” and “race” interchangeably, underscoring the bio-medical foundation of both.

Pan-European trends of both “scientific racism,” with its elaborate apparatus for categorizing ethnic and racial groups, and what George L. Mosse has aptly called “mystical racism”—such that derived not from physically observable characteristics, but from historical, cultural or linguistic distinctiveness declared to be encoded “in the blood”⁴⁷—had much to do with the ascendancy of a *sui generis* racist discourse in some regional cultures. Characteristically, it was the political and scholarly field of ethnogenesis that became its privileged area of application. For those keen to rearrange global hierarchies along “innate” racial differences Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* (1871) must have been disappointing in that it argued that “hybrid vigor,” not racial purity, was what ensured the domination of one human group over its environment. In Southeastern Europe, however, where the difficulty of claiming “racial purity” for any of the local peoples was, as a rule, deemed insurmountable, Darwin’s scientific insight served to boost rather than allay ethnogenetic scheming. In the Bulgarian case at least the assertion of vitalist superiority for the racially mixed Bulgarian nation now stood as both respectable and convenient (albeit, in the longer run, also potentially explosive) option. A complementary strategy was the subversion of the racist by the ethnic (and ethno-populist) narrative: while feeding on the arguments of “mystical racism,” the new organicist mold of national ideology remained firmly embedded in the Romantic framework. Generally speaking, unlike in Romania, the progressivist and historicist thrust of the Bulgarian national-liberal project survived the post-Romantic positivist assault, together with the infatuation with the symbiosis of language, history and culture, rather than racial lineage, as the ultimate *locus* of the “national essence.” Albeit under different conditions and political circumstances, the same applies for the Macedonian and the Albanian projects.

47 Mosse (1978), pp. 94–112. Cf. Payne (2003), pp. 126–8.

THE “INTELLECTUALS’ BURDEN”: SCIENCE, CANONICITY, AND MEDIATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOLK

Ethnogenetic and racial methodologies were intrinsic to what has been termed here “scientific definitions of the folk.” The politics of national peculiarity had, as a matter of fact, a much broader multidisciplinary genealogy and drew from far more sources than the historiography of political thought may lead us to believe. Geography, biology, anthropology/ethnology, political science, philosophy, psychology, sociology...—one can barely think of a 19th-century social science, and of any human science, that had not contributed in one way or another to the crystallization of the national discourse.

The three essays assembled under this heading pinpoint some of the modes by which human- and social-science disciplines and scholarly conventions took on to legitimate national definitions so that the nation could appear, not as a program of a particular elite group, but as the apogee of the irrevocable objective forces of development. At least after the mid-19th century it was not any more sufficient that collective historical experiences were retold via folkloric rediscovery. They were subjected to scientific scrutiny and “interpretation” with the help and authority of scientific expertise. It was no coincidence that the professionalization of history in the late 19th century coincided with the general scientific view that nations were natural, inevitable, and highly evolved units of social organization, sociability, and distinct subjectivity. Some students of nationalism go as far as to see the “national disciplines,” like archeology, philology, anthropology, sociology and history as “necessary tools of modern social solidarity and citizenship [without which] there can, in a very literal sense, be no nation. [...] the ‘nation’ can only be imagined through the medium of science.”⁴⁸

Admittedly, the nationalization and professionalization of the sciences in the course of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th centuries was pursued with different intensity and had different rhythm across our region. As in most of Europe, history, linguistics and folklore, together with latter-day ethnography and biology, were the privileged resources of scientific identity building.⁴⁹ (It should nevertheless be noted that the process of professionalization of historiography and literary studies did not begin to take shape until the 1880s in Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia, the 1930s in Turkey, and after the Second World

48 Smith (1999), pp. 171–172.

49 On the “new scientificity” in history production, see Feldner (2003), pp. 3–22.

War in Albania and Macedonia). D. Lilova's survey unravels the connection between the Bulgarians' barbarian auto-stereotypization, the prescriptions of the European historiographical canon, and the state of geographical knowledge. Much like in the case of Hungarian ethnography a few decades later, the history of a discipline, in this case geography, proved deeply interrelated with the history of nation making. The other essays in this section, and partly also Trencséni's analysis of the Romanian political discourses, look into different disciplinary channels through which the arguably counter-Romantic scientific trends switched the registers of national self-narration. New research in biology, ethnology, and social psychology brought these disciplines to the centre identity-politics stage. The metastases of the Bulgarian racist and the Romanian organicist discourses highlight the way in which the advancements in biology, the paradigmatic scientific framework of the positivists, affected the notions of nationhood. For the Romanian *Junimists* and the turn-of-the-century Bulgarian ethnologists alike the assimilation of the "laws of evolution" into the new sciences of society underscored the biological determinants and naturalistic understanding of all forms of social organization, peoples and states included. It is equally symptomatic that democratically-minded intellectuals, such as Bogdan Haşdeu in Romania and Ivan Shishmanov in Bulgaria, saw an intimate connection between the democratization of the political life and the rise of the "popular sciences" like ethnography and linguistics.

L. Szabó's discussion of the ways the discourse and thinking about the folk infiltrated and transformed different types of knowledge, on the other hand, spurs important new insights into the institutional aspects of identity building. The Hungarian ethnography's thrust to intervene into and "colonize" the tourist movement appears as being driven by an intense competition among disciplines for control over the symbolic representation of the nation and the national imagination. Thus, by linking travel, popular touristic activities and ideologies of health to the (as yet infant) Hungarian ethnography, the latter expanded immensely its popular quasi-scientific base *vis-à-vis* old and new competitors such as history, literature and sociology. Remarkably, nationalized tourism, in its turn, became instrumental in assigning a special role to ethnography in economic nation making. One can thus speak of a twofold dialectical linkage affecting the narratives of the national: between the different (old and newly emerging) social and human sciences and between the various areas of knowledge which these sciences infiltrated in the process of their institutionalization and competition.

The role of science in identity formation is of course inseparable from that of intellectuals, who combined the critical functions of "the greatest agency in

the shaping of national understanding, propagating the values of the nation, disciplining the people internally, and enforcing the rules and boundaries of the constituent people.” R. Suny and M. Kennedy have defined this role “not merely as reflective of what exists, but as constitutive of the nation itself [...] Intellectuals here are the creators, not only of nationalisms, but of the more universal discourse of the nation, of the very language and universe of meaning in which nations become possible.”⁵⁰ Above and beyond joining to this broad mission, Southeast-European intellectuals were charged with, and saw it as their duty to perform, a double mediation: between archaism and modernity, and between the (authority of) Western expertise and local “knowledges.” As already mentioned, many of the essays in this collection—most pointedly those of Trencsényi, Aleksov, Puto and Bilmez—take stock of the divergent answers which various groups of intellectuals-cum-politicians gave both to the relationship between imported modernity and local tradition and to questions of historical continuity. In spite of these divergences, however, they all appear as having partaken in a common canonizing task: institutionalizing folklore as the repository of national authenticity at the same time as selecting the elements meant to flesh its canonized adaptation. Archaism was thus intimately weaved into the modern semantics of nationhood and the cultural canon.

Szabó’s survey of the Hungarian ethnographic versions of nationhood points to the strikingly broad range of “national life” spheres, including the supposedly least amenable to ideologization—industry, which the ethnographic discourse had turned into *next* of modernity and archaism. He shows us how the touristic movement in late 19th-century Hungary, once absorbed by the rising Hungarian ethnography, was able to radically reverse the dominant narrative about the destructive impact of modernity on “primitive” folk culture and turn the symbiosis of the two into the foundation for the nation’s “wealth, power and independence.” By converting ethnographic objects into market-oriented commodities intended for mass domestic consumption and foreign export (“setting the standards of the latest fashion in Paris”), and supporting industrial-sized handicraftsmanship (“domestic industry”), it produced a double ideological *volte-face*. It endowed the folk culture with the potential to wreak “an organic rebirth and modernization of the allegedly destroyed character of the nation” and, simultaneously, turned the taxonomy of modernity on its head by converting ancient authenticity into an engine of modern

⁵⁰ Suny and Kennedy (1999), pp. 2–3.

industrialization. Jovan Jovanović Zmaj's input into Serbian linguistic and literary "modernization" is another case in point. Not only did he push further the codification of the modern "Serbo-Croatian" language by purging it of foreign (albeit, curiously, not "archaic" Turkish) imports and indulging into "re-creating" and glorifying its original beauty. He was also instrumental in imposing a normative notion of Serbian "national poetry" devised as a replica of the poetic tradition of the people—of folklore, that is to say.

The professionalizing itineraries of Sami Frashëri and Faik Konitza, much as those of the *fin-de-siècle* Bulgarian and Hungarian ethnographers, bring to light, on the other hand, the intellectuals' mediating role as "importers" of ethnocentric knowledge from the Western sciences: in these instances Albanology, Turkology, biologized social theories and models of ethnographic musealization. National myths of antiquity and indigenizing representations apparently profited the most from this transfer, adding scholarly and international respectability to ethnic definitions. Remarkably, it was the Scandinavian "example" of exhibiting national ethnography that set the standards and the model for a separate Transylvanian ethnographic museum (opened in 1898). It stressed the exclusivist ethnocultural character of the Transylvanian-Hungarian nation-building project in opposition to the Budapest-based museum which was seen as "Western" and non-national. Thus, Szabó shows us, the "cleavages inside the different ethnographies of the national within the emerging discipline [of ethnography]"—cleavages that underlay and bolstered the rival conceptions of the national and the divergent answers to the relationship between the ethnic and the modern—were supported by different (and differently interpreted) yet unquestionably "Western" foreign models of exhibiting the folk.

A privileged place in the national pantheons was predictably bestowed on the figure of the national poet as the embodiment of the "living conscience" of the nation. "A poet," Herder maintained, "is the creator of the nation around him, he gives them a world to see and has their souls in his hand to lead them to that world."⁵¹ The centrality and visibility of the poet's creative exertions were largely derived from the pivotal place of language and literature in the process of national revival, which in essence implied the movement from oral to written discourse. In our collection, this mission is exemplified by the Serbian "people's poet" Jovan Jovanović Zmaj. Perhaps even more exemplary, in a regional perspective, is the range of political functions which intellectuals

51 Cited in Suny (2000), p. 576.

such as Zmaj attributed to (folk) poetry. In addition to turning literary activities into a political weapon in his self-conscious nation-making crusade, Zmaj's poetic contrivances, B. Aleksov tells us, had done a lot to shape the peculiar ethno-populist profile of Serbian political liberalism and, later, radicalism. Curiously, that was accomplished in a reverse act, joined by several other literary giants of the age, of reducing Serbian literature to popular oral culture, thus obstructing the consolidation of an encompassing vision of the national heritage and accentuating its *völkisch*, populist and anti-intellectualist, overtones. Even so, Zmaj's posthumous place amidst the fathers of the Serbian nation, much like Faik Konitza's for the Albanian, ultimately depended on the exigencies of the political, each empowered current adding its own reading and valuation of his *oeuvre*. Aleksov traces minutely the conflicting interpretations, instrumentalizations and canonization of the people's poet in order to highlight the "constructivist, manipulative and historically contingent appropriation of literature as part of national identity politics."

The media, through which such politics were pursued, changed over time. In the early phases of nation building, as Sata's and Lilova's contributions suggest, popular productions of narratives of the nation, like textbooks, newspaper articles, and commemorations, were more influential in constructing the imagined community than the work of professionals. Intellectual politics and elite ideologies had a broader range of application and consequence during the initial conception of the nation and codification of its culture. Szabó and Detchev, on the other hand, spotlight the tendency towards professionalization of identity (re-)production and dissemination once the nation became the naturalized form of political community. Concurrently the professional milieu of this production was being increasingly differentiated into new "national" disciplines, and the intellectuality involved was becoming more widely dispersed. Together with the advent of mass politics and "social" nationness, this reduced the freedom of intellectuals to legislate with impunity on the incipient nation,⁵² yet they remained as convinced as before of the political value of scholarship.

The dislocations caused by the First World War completed all these institutional and intellectual conversions and brought the 19th-century *belle époque* to an end. The subsequent cultural, spiritual and social "crisis of Europe," and of modernity in general, coalesced with a crisis of collective identity resulting in a feverish search for new political and cultural models that would have fitted the "national specificities." The interwar attempts at reformulating the national

identity in many ways diverged from the tradition this volume deals with. During the long 19th century, the politics of national peculiarity, dominated by the hegemonic Western concepts of evolution and progress as it was, oscillated between the warring projects of preserving “folk tradition” and importing “Western modernity,” and the civic connotations of belonging permeated the ethnic ones. In the face of the crisis of liberalism and the evolutionary vision of history after 1918, a new discourse emerged in these countries featuring an alternative, profoundly anti-historicist and autochthonist notion of national community and uniqueness. Yet, despite the claim of a radical rupture with the erstwhile normative notions of nationhood, it was to the pre-existent romantic discursive tradition underlying the national canons and shaping the master-narratives of identity that this new discourse turned for inspiration. Re-filtering the basic concepts of “folk,” “nation” and “people” through a new “morphology of culture,” it spurred the recurrence of others, such as myth, rebirth, organicity, or prehistory, which were thematized in the Romantic period, submerged in the period of positivist attacks, and resurfaced in the interwar period. Mircea Eliade’s reading of the legacy of Bogdan Haşdeu, which B. Trencsényi discusses in his essay, sheds some light on this complex relationship between the old nationalism and the new. The two, all the same, did not belong to the same world: they stood for not only different temporalities of the national but also different concepts of and attitudes to modernity, conjuring up opposite projections of the national self onto time and space.

It would be grossly overstretched to claim that this collection comes up with anything approaching a comprehensive typology of the regional identity discourses in the 19th century. We believe, however, that both conceptually and as research “topography” it charts the outlines of an interpretative model which could improve our capacity to deal with the issues of Southeast-European modernities and identities in a more meaningful way. As a scholarly advisor to this endeavor and staunch champion of cross-national and comparative research, I for one have been reassured of the heuristic and cognitive benefits from looking into one’s own tradition from the vantage point of other traditions. A truly comparativist endeavor would of course entail more than that. Yet the very shift of perspective can already make us aware of aspects whose existence we didn’t suspect, perhaps even alter the questions whose answers we deem it worthwhile searching for.⁵³

53 The full versions of the contributions presented here have been published electronically in the *CAS Working Paper Series* and are accessible via the homepage of the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia, see www.cas.bg

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RECONCILIATION OF THE SPIRITS AND FUSION OF THE INTERESTS

“Ottomanism” as an Identity Politics

ALEXANDER VEZENKOV

The history of the different national traditions of social and political thinking in Southeastern Europe is usually examined in their relationship with the developments in the leading European nation states. This is certainly a legitimate approach, but it should be added that beside the multiple interactions between the “marginalized,” “small nations” in the “periphery” and the “European core” there was one more major actor—the multinational empires in the Eastern part of the continent. They had their identity politics, which failed in the long run, but had a considerable influence during the 19th century. In what concerns the Ottoman Empire, almost all studies mention these politics, usually referred to as “Ottomanism,” but very few of them examine it. This article focuses on “Ottomanism” as a problem in its own right, but also raises the question of the impact of these politics on the national discourses in the region.

According to the conventional view, “Ottomanism” or the idea that all the subjects of the sultan must be bound up in a “brotherly union” became a matter of state policy in the Ottoman Empire during the later years of the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839) and especially during the period of the reforms, known also as the *Tanzimat* (1839–1876). By creating a common feeling of belonging to the Ottoman State, it had to counterbalance arising nationalisms and to preserve the empire from disintegration. It was officially stated that all subjects are and should be called by one and the same name: *Ottomans*.

Although dominating the political agenda of the imperial elite during several decades, ideologically the concept of Ottomanism was formulated only later, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Ironically, this was due to a large extent to the critiques of this policy and especially to Yusuf Akçura’s famous article “The Three Political Systems” published in 1904 and the consequent answers to his polemical text (Ali Kemal, Ahmet Ferit, etc.).¹ Impor-

1 Akçura (1976).

tant intellectual and political figures as Ahmed Midhat and Ebüzziya Tevfik also contributed in these debates. It was only at that time that Ottomanism (in Turkish, *Osmanlılık*) started to be used as a technical term in the sense described above, keeping also its meaning of “Ottomanness.”

Despite this intellectual effort, Ottomanism was and remained a vague concept, while “Ottomanist” policy itself gave only a limited result. Foreigners and non-Muslims in the empire persisted in using the words Ottomans and Turks as synonyms; ordinary peasants in Anatolia regarded as Ottomans only members of the elite. It is questionable whether the large majority of the so-called *turcophiles* (i.e., those inclined to see the political future of their community within the Ottoman State) among the Christians in the empire were convinced and conscious adepts of Ottomanism as a long-term perspective. The cases of non-Muslims who accepted calling themselves Ottomans in the sense of belonging to an Ottoman nation, remain anecdotic exceptions. Who was Ottoman was problematic even for those who sincerely used this etiquette for themselves. As Ahmed Midhat Efendi once stated: “I am Ottoman. And not only an Ottoman—I am the purest of Ottomans, I am a Muslim and a Turk.”² The perception that “all without exception are Ottomans,” but only some of them could be proud of being “purest Ottomans” has never been intellectually surmounted and the use of the term remains ambiguous in the works of many contemporary scholars.

Although using one and the same term, different types of identity were labeled as “Ottomanism.” In his famous dictionary of the Turkish language, Şemseddin Sami defined *Osmanlılık* as “belonging to the Ottoman tribe and family (it could be translated also as “people and race”) or as “being a subject of the Ottoman State” (*Osmanlı kavim ve cinsine mensubiyet veya Devlet-i Osmaniye’ye tab’iyet...*). To these two meanings corresponded two different priorities in the discussions about Ottoman identity, interested in *all* Ottoman subjects or in those who could pretend to be *purest* Ottomans. The official *Tanzimat* policy, that became latter known as Ottomanism, was directed toward all subjects. It was promoted also as an alternative to the nationalisms of the non-Muslims and aimed at attracting them to identify with and to support the Ottoman State. To a large extent, the Young Turks took up these ideas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and during the 1908 revolution.

2 Answering a foreigner during his trip in Europe in 1889: Ahmed Midhat, *Avrupa’da bir cevelân*. Istanbul, 1307=1890, p. 97, quoted after: Strauss (2002), p. 39.

At the same time, most of the Ottoman intellectuals who discussed the problem of Ottomanism were much more preoccupied with the identity issues of the Muslim and Turkish core of the Ottoman subjects. In the early 20th-century debates among Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals, Ottomanism was seen either as an alternative to Turkish nationalism (Akçura) or as something inseparable from Turkish and Islamic identity (Akçura's critics). Akçura's thesis was that there were three possible ways for the political survival of the Ottoman Empire. The first was "Ottomanism," the policy that dominated during the *Tanzimat* period and aimed at the achievement of national unity of all the peoples inhabiting the Ottoman Empire; the second one was Islamism, that became dominant under Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909) and was oriented toward creating closer ties among and winning the support of all Muslims, irrespective of whether they were Ottoman subjects; the third and the newest one was Turkism (which in fact corresponds rather to Pan-Turkism than to present day Turkish nationalism). Akçura examined the advantages and the disadvantages of each one of the three and defended Turkism as a viable alternative of Islamism that dominated at that time. The main critique against Akçura's thesis was that the very question was formulated in a wrong way: it is not possible, wrote Ali Kemal, to separate the Turkic from the Islamic, the Islamic from the Turkic, the Islamic and the Turkic from the Ottoman and vice versa, "to divide the whole into three."³ What was common in both these approaches was that they were concerned mostly with those, who were considered to be at the same time Muslims, Turks and Ottoman subjects, but were irrelevant for the non-Muslim and non-Turkic peoples in the empire. Finally one could see the advocates of the idea of Ottoman identity in the early 20th century gradually adopting the way of thinking and the vocabulary of modern nationalism,⁴ to the extent that some supporters of "Ottomanism" like Ziya Gökalp became exemplary Turkish nationalists.

Due to the existence of different and changing perceptions of Ottomanism and Ottoman identity, studying all the texts dealing with this topic as one single group would lead to misinterpretations. It is important to differentiate between the discussions among the intellectual leaders of the Muslim-Turkish

3 Ali Kemal in "Our Answer" (Cevabımız) to Akçura: "*bizim için Türkü İslamdan, İslamı Türkten, Türk ve İslamı Osmanlılıktan, Osmanlılığı Türkten, İslamdan ayırmak, tekliği üçe bölmek olamaz.*" In: Akçura (1976), p. 37.

4 Türesay (2005).

elite in the early 20th century and the propaganda of the *Tanzimat* period that aimed to attract not only the “purest” of the Ottomans but all the subjects of the Empire. From this point of view, the present study focuses on *Tanzimat* Ottomanism (i.e., Ottomanism as an identity politics during the *Tanzimat* period), while keeping an eye on the late 19th and early 20th century debates and interpretations. In parallel, using the Bulgarian case (as one among several possible case studies), it will try to examine how these statements were translated into the language of one of the non-Turkish peoples living in the Empire and how the “Ottomanist” messages functioned in this particular milieu.

Taking as its starting point Akçura’s widely accepted definition of “Ottomanism” as a policy of unifying all the subjects of the Ottoman Empire during the *Tanzimat*, this study uses it only as a working hypothesis. Undoubtedly, at that time, modern political propaganda appeared in the Ottoman State, and it aimed to “awake” the patriotism of all the subjects of the empire. Still, Akçura’s definition of “Ottomanism” was very far from the way of thinking of the *Tanzimat* leaders. A representative of a next generation, born in Russia and educated in France, later considered as one of the founding fathers of Turkish nationalism,⁵ he attributed to them his own way of perceiving identity in terms of nations.

THE PRESS AND THE PROPAGANDA OF OTTOMANISM

During the *Tanzimat* period, the Ottoman government engaged with efforts to form and control public opinion through the press. At both the central and the local level, the first newspapers in Turkish were edited by the state. Furthermore, state administration exercised control over private newspapers through a combination of restrictions and subsidies. Newspapers had to educate people, to “denounce” and withstand foreign propaganda and finally to form public opinion, obviously in the direction desired by the state leaders. The people had to be properly “educated” and foreign intrigues intended to disturb people’s minds were to be prevented. A Decree of 1867, reducing the freedom of the periodical press, justified this measure with the accusation that “instead of defending the country where they lived and prospered,” some newspapers put themselves at the disposal of the enemies of the country. In

5 Georgeon (1980).

such a way they had become “an obstacle to the reconciliation of the spirits and to the fusion of the interests.”⁶

The newspapers of the non-Muslims published within the Empire also contributed, deliberately or not, to the propagation of “Ottomanist” ideas. The very fact that they were printed within the Empire under state control was not without consequences. Their outspoken fidelity towards the state and the sultan was probably fake, but it contributed to the Ottomanist indoctrination of the non-Muslims. Official propaganda, including what was later called Ottomanism, circulated in private newspapers, including those that were not considered *turcophile*. The very way newspapers were produced was of decisive importance: a large part of them consisted of short articles reproduced and usually translated from other newspapers.

The periodical press did not remain only a tool of propaganda, but soon occupied a key place in the political and intellectual life of the empire. During the later decades of the *Tanzimat* period, newspapers (not books!) started to play a crucial role in formulating and popularizing political ideas in the Ottoman Empire.⁷ Unlike the educational system and book printing that were highly autonomous for each community, in the field of the press there was a constant exchange of ideas. This circulation of short articles contributed to the formation of a “spirit of the time” in many respects common for the educated strata, and more generally for the more curious and better-informed individuals among the different peoples in the empire. The sultan’s subjects were reading different newspapers in different languages, but in many cases they were reading very similar things. In this regard the intellectual climate created at the end of the *Tanzimat* period essentially differed from the one that existed before. The peoples of the Ottoman Empire were probably not living “like brothers,” as the official propaganda claimed, but at that time they were really living “together.”

In promoting unity and patriotism, Ottoman authorities relied not only on publishing newspapers, but also on the impact of institutions like the army and the schools. Still, for this study it is the periodical press that is considered to be the most important—both as a propaganda tool that exercised certain influence, and as a source giving the possibility to examine the identity politics of the Ottoman State during the *Tanzimat* period. What is important for the present study are not the original ideas of specific authors, but the frequently

6 Aristarchi (1974), vol. III, p. 326.

7 Koloğlu (1992), 130 sqq.

repeated arguments, explanations and clichés, that appeared in any newspaper. They could help us to understand the political discourse dominating during the *Tanzimat* era.⁸

THE MAIN ARGUMENTS OF THE “OTTOMANIST” PROPAGANDA

Because it was competing with nationalisms, official Ottoman propaganda had to counter their demands and claims. There was, however, one problem: Ottomanism was not able to propose an ethnocentric vision about who the Ottomans were, including all the subjects of the sultan. The same was true about faith and language. For that very reason, the official propaganda usually avoided discussing certain questions, and the accent was put on a different type of arguments that had to counterbalance the nationalist claims.

EQUALITY

The official propaganda insisted on the equality of all its subjects and especially between Muslims and non-Muslims. They had to be equal in rights (before the law, in courts, etc.) and in duties (in paying taxes). According to the Reform Edict of 1856, subjects had to have equal access to positions in the public administration and even to the army.⁹ The new legislation usually pointed out that access to different positions and institutions was open to “all classes of the Ottoman subjects.” This was the case for enrollment in state schools,¹⁰ as civil servants and even as prison guardians.¹¹ The propa-

8 Beside the existing studies on the 19th-century Ottoman press, the present article relies mostly on *Tuna/Dunav*, the official local newspaper published in Turkish and Bulgarian in Rusçuk (Rousse), the capital city of the Danube Province, in the years 1865–1877. Obviously it is a provincial newspaper, but such newspapers were prepared by civil servants of the respective local administration and for that very reason they are much more representative of the mentality of the Ottoman officials, than the “semi-official” newspapers published in French in the capital.

9 Findley (1982a).

10 *Düstur* (1290=1873/4), vol. II, p. 187.

11 “Habshaneler gardiyanlar için talimatlar” art. 2: “her sınıf tebaa’dan adam intihab edilecektir” in *Düstur* (1293=1876/7), vol. III, pp. 220–222.

ganda concerning "equal rights" was very intensive and provoked nervous reactions from both sides. Non-Muslims started complaining that their newly acquired equality was not respected in practice and were reporting cases of discrimination. From the other side, the claim that due to the reforms and the interventions of foreign powers non-Muslims received more liberties than Muslim was widespread and voiced by statesmen and intellectuals alike.¹² These claims reappear in present day Balkan and respectively Turkish historiographies.

The most problematic dimension of equality was related to military service. Despite the intention of the 1856 Reform Edict, non-Muslims with some insignificant exceptions were not enrolled in the army before 1909. But at least in theory all male subjects were contributing equally to the security of the Sublime State, although in a different way—some by serving under the banners, others by paying the military tax.¹³ Another possibility for non-Muslims to participate in the protection of the state were donations (usually in cash) for the Ottoman army, regularly reported in the official press.¹⁴

TOLERANCE

The official propaganda underlined the tolerance of the Ottoman State towards the non-Muslims combined with counter-examples of mistreatment of Muslims in Greece, Russia, etc. Articles in the press reported cases of fair treatment of Greeks by the Ottoman authorities, even compassion toward them, and at the same time reported cases of mistreatment of Muslims/Turks by the Greeks.¹⁵ The discrimination of the Jews in Eastern European countries (mostly in Romania and Russia) was a preferred topic for the newspapers, offering another occasion to underline the tolerance in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶

¹² Midhat Pacha (1878), pp. 13–14; Yerlikaya (1994), pp. 104–106; Rahme, (1999), pp. 28–29.

¹³ Namık Kemal reacted by pointing out that it was not the same to pay and to die: Rahme (1999), p. 36.

¹⁴ *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 277, May 19, 1868.

¹⁵ *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 307, September 1, 1868.

¹⁶ *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 189, July 5, 1867; no. 258, March 6, 1868; no. 327, November 10, 1868; no. 559, March 17, 1871.

LIVING LIKE BROTHERS

In writings about the equality and the tolerance towards non-Muslims, one could often find the statement that all the subjects of the sultan were living “like brothers” [*kardeşçe*]. The implicit message was that religious and other differences were not an obstacle for living together. Symptomatic of this brotherhood were the donations, regularly reported in the press, testifying for the compassion of Christians for Muslim refugees (from Crimea, Crete, Serbia).¹⁷ These “politically correct” and kind words of brotherhood were usually absent from the discourse about gypsies.¹⁸

JUSTICE

One topic that reappeared very often in the official publications was justice [*adalet*]. It was presented as characteristic for Islam and also for the Ottoman State. It was claimed that the successes of the first sultans were due to the fair treatment they had shown toward everybody;¹⁹ later sultans behaved in the same way.²⁰ Still, justice was presented not only as a traditional value, but also as something restored by the reforms. Numerous articles insisted that the Ottoman legislation was constantly improving and were calling the subjects to respect the law.²¹ The new laws and regulations were usually published in the official press and occasionally in other newspapers. In some cases, the legal text was preceded by an introduction underlining the improvement introduced by the respective law, assuring better and equal treatment of the subjects.²²

17 *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 162 and the following numbers, 1867.

18 *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 464, April 5, 1870; no. 233, December 6, 1867; no. 260, March 13, 1868.

19 Midhat-Pacha (1878), pp. 7–8.

20 *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 323, October 27, 1868.

21 *Турция*, no. 4, March 15, 1869; *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 415, October 1, 1869; *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 494, July 22, 1870.

22 *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 192, 1867.

SECURITY

In addition to the image of the Ottoman State as providing equal and fair treatment to all its subjects (and to a large extent to foreigners), the administration was praised as securing peace and order. Reports on crimes appeared regularly in official newspapers, but they were always accompanied by the information that the criminal had already been captured and brought to justice, or at least that the local authorities were following the wrongdoer and it was only a question of time before he was caught. In some cases, the information quoted the article of the Penal Code, under which the criminal had been sentenced, thus demonstrating that law was respected.²³ Cases of Christian peasants who had emigrated but wanted to move back to the empire also received coverage by the press, thus underlying the full protection provided by the sultan and his government.

THE SULTAN

Just like other autocrats of the 19th century, the Ottoman sultans tried “to forge a direct link with their people.”²⁴ During the *Tanzimat* period this link was very important and was almost synonymous with the fidelity toward the Ottoman State. It is only at later stages with the Young Turks and especially after the 1908 revolution when patriotism without the sultan became conceivable. Still, during the *Tanzimat*, the official propaganda counted very much on the traditional feelings of fidelity toward the sultan: at that time his portrait began to be exposed in public places,²⁵ editorial articles in newspapers and prefaces of printed books presented him as the guardian and initiator of everything positive in the empire. His voyages throughout the country, donations for mosques, schools and other initiatives also aimed to contribute to his popularity.

Publications in Bulgarian paid tribute to the reigning sultan on a regular basis. The pleonastic phrase “our Tzar His Majesty the Sultan” that appeared in these texts is a clear sign of an attempt to present the sultan as part of the Bulgarian political tradition. This was not only lip service—notes and chronicles written for private use also eulogize the sultan and the members of his family.²⁶

23 *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 447, February 1, 1870.

24 Deringil (1998), p. 17.

25 Deringil (1998), p. 22.

26 Published in: Nachev, Fermandzhiev (1984), especially pp. 161, 180, 190, 294 and 351.

PATRIOTISM

Simultaneously the authorities strove to promote a new feeling—patriotism toward the Ottoman State, irrespective of religious or any other affiliation.²⁷ The word “*vatan*” in Turkish and simultaneously its equivalent in Bulgarian (“*otechestvo*”) next to their original meaning of “native place,” began to acquire the new sense of “fatherland” (closer to the meaning of “*Vaterland*” in German). This process took place only gradually, and in the 1850s and 1860s only a few people used the word in this new way.²⁸ The changing meaning of the word “*vatan*” and the portraying of the whole Empire as a “native place,” was related to the idea that the territory of the state was an indivisible whole. The unity and indivisibility of the Ottoman State were proclaimed in the opening article of the 1876 Constitution.

Patriotism had to become the main argument for serving in the army. Although religious fever remained decisive for motivating an almost exclusively Muslim army, patriotic discourse was forged as well. A speech delivered by the military commander of the town of Niš in 1869 and reproduced in *Tuna* provides a good example of civic patriotism, avoiding any references to religion, Allah or Holy War. It was devoted to the obligation of the military men to serve “the monarch, the state, the fatherland and the people” (“*melik ve devlet ve vatan ve millet*”; in the Bulgarian version translated as: “*vladetelya, dârzhavata, rodinata i naroda*”) and to protect them.²⁹

The concept of the “fatherland” appeared earlier and was much more successful than the idea of bestowing a common denomination to all subjects.³⁰ Although the non-Muslims never accepted perceiving themselves as “Ottomans,” as the 1876 Constitution postulated (art. 8, indirectly in art. 9 and 17), during the *Tanzimat* period they began to refer to the Ottoman State as the “fatherland.” Starting at least from the early 1850s, one could find in Bulgarian newspapers expressions like “our common fatherland—the Ottoman tsardom”³¹ or “common and dear fatherland.”³² Patriotism did not always mean

27 Petrosyan (1975), p. 144: article on patriotism in *Sarajevski cvjetnik* of July 25, 1875.

28 Heinzelmann (2002). The word “*vatan/otchestvo*” continued to be used with its old meaning of “native place” even in official editions: *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 550, February 10, 1871.

29 *Tuna/ Dunav*, no. 387, June 22, 1869.

30 See Dessislava Lilova’s text in this volume for a very interesting example of a Bulgarian journalist analyzing the railway network from “‘Turkish territorial’ (*turskozemna*) point of view.”

31 *Tzarigradski vestnik*, no. 68, January 1, 1852.

32 *Makedoniya*, IV, no. 1, November 15, 1969.

loyalty to the Ottoman State—the leaders of the national movements also called themselves “patriots.” An article in *Turtziya* explained, obviously from an official point of view, the difference between “real” and “fake” patriotism.³³

PROSPERITY

The official propaganda insisted that the Ottoman State provided not only security, but also comfort and prosperity [*rahat ve refah*] for its subjects. Stability of the Ottoman State and prosperity of the people were presented as closely interrelated and this was made very clear in the *Hatışerif of Gülhane* (1839). According to the official propaganda, the small (non-Muslim and non-Turkish) peoples included in the Empire could achieve prosperity only within the Ottoman State, and only if the state itself was prospering. According to this view, the small national states were unviable and dependent on other foreign countries and interests.³⁴ Publications in official newspapers insisted that the unity of all peoples was needed to achieve economic and cultural prosperity. In such a way, the developmentalist discourse was combined with the idea of a brotherly union among the different peoples and the call for serving the fatherland.

FOREIGNERS

The self-identification of the subjects with the Ottoman State was to a large extent built by opposing them to foreigners. The Law of Ottoman Citizenship or, if translated literally, of “subjectship” (1869)³⁵ was above all an attempt to prevent the subjects of the sultan from opting for a *foreign* citizenship. The law itself was not concerned with the unity of Muslims and non-Muslims, it was not insisting on equality, as some studies overinterpreted it,³⁶ but aimed at drawing a clear line between the Ottoman and the foreign subjects.

The same opposition to foreigners is visible in publications on economic issues. Protectionism of local production became a state policy in the 1860s.

³³ *Turtziya*, V, no. 20, July 5, 1869.

³⁴ Abu-Manneh (1980), p. 298; *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 435, December 14, 1869.

³⁵ *Düstur*, (1289=1872/3), vol. I, 16–18; *Edirne/Adrianopolis/Odrin*, no 64, January 22, 1869.

³⁶ Safrastyan (1985), pp. 60–61; Mazhdrakova-Tchavdarova (1988), p. 82

At the same time, the Ottoman press began to call for the use of local products instead of imported ones. In these texts local products were praised regardless of the faith of their producers.³⁷ In general, the developmentalist discourse, much as the feelings against the foreign powers and their interventions, provided a good basis for pleading for the unity of the Ottoman peoples.

Although competing with the various internal nationalisms, foreign “intrigues” were considered the main threat for the Ottoman State. An article in *Turtziya* (1864–1873, ed. Nikola Genovitch) expressed satisfaction that a group of radical Bulgarian emigrants in Romania broke their relations with Russia.³⁸ This is because from the official point of view the nationalist movements were mere tools in the hands of foreign states. Similar was the attitude toward foreign missionaries, therefore the authorities clearly preferred non-Muslims to keep their traditional faith, than to convert to “foreign creeds.”³⁹

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One may ask to what extent the writings on all these topics were connected with each other and whether they constituted one coherent political project. A positive answer could be given only with caution. It should be noted, first of all, that the Ottoman propaganda during the *Tanzimat* made use of a number of traditional arguments. The figure of the sultan as a just ruler, preventing all kinds of oppression towards the ordinary people was not a novelty. The same applies to the idea that the non-Muslims inhabiting the Ottoman State enjoyed its protection—Ottoman documents always used different terms for the non-Muslims within and outside the Ottoman Empire. It should be indicated that many arguments were based on Islam: the Ottoman State provided justice because Islam was a religion of justice; the Ottoman State had always been tolerant because Islam was tolerant towards other religions; the Ottomans were able to achieve progress because Islam was opened to innovations, etc. The Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane started by referring to the Koran. Some thinkers went further and tried to find the roots of everything new and positive in Islam: Namık Kemal for example found justification in the Koran for the prin-

37 *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 308, September 4, 1868; no. 314, September 25, 1868; no. 326, November 6, 1868.

38 *Turtziya*, no. 2, March 1, 1869.

39 Deringil (1998, p. 29) quotes to this effect an imperial order of 1897.

cial of representative government and stated that the separation of power existed in the early Islamic history.⁴⁰

As a consequence, at the level of argumentation, the transition to Islamism in the following years was relatively easy. In this respect the thesis that Islamism replaced Ottomanism under Abdulhamid II should be at least partially revised: Ottomanism was not replaced by Islamism, it only became more Islamist. In addition, the Islamist policy in the following decades did not discredit Ottomanism among the large majority of the most numerous non-Turkish populations in the Empire—the Arabs, nor among most of the Albanians. Ottoman patriotism was also actively propagandized during the following decades and in the first months after the 1908 revolution even non-Muslim leaders seemed enthusiastic about the “common fatherland.”

It should be added, that in its early stages the Turkish national movement after World War I had predominantly Islamic motivations and rhetoric in contrast to the aggressive laicism characteristic of the second half of the 1920s and 1930s.⁴¹ Finally, various “Ottomanist” arguments of minor importance were also appropriated by Turkish nationalism. Let us give only one example in this regard: an article on education reprinted in *Tuna* from *Mümeviz* claimed that honesty was a traditional Ottoman virtue, which was lost under the impact of civilization.⁴² Lost, but not for too long. In his main work *The Principles of Turkism* (*Türkçülüğün esasları*, 1923) Ziya Gökalp devoted a whole chapter to “honesty” as something specific to the Turks—a quality that earlier was specific to the “Ottomans.”

But even if many of the virtues of the Ottoman State were due to Islam (tolerance, justice), even if some of them were to remain characteristic also for the Turkish nation (honesty), there is no doubt that during the *Tanzimat* a new type of political agenda was brought into life. A good illustration of this agenda is a brochure published in 1847 in Constantinople, which, according to a note on the front page, was compiled of “*extraits de Journal de Constantinople et Echo d'Orient*.” The title and the subtitle were eloquent enough: *De l'unité nationale dans l'Empire Ottoman. Par la législation, l'administration, le territoire, la tolérance, l'éducation et la presse*. The brochure presented the new political concepts introduced with the reforms: universality of law, territorial unity of the state and uniform administration, religious tolerance, secular educational system for all subjects, development of book printing and periodical

40 Rahme (1999), p. 32.

41 Zürcher (1999).

42 *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 398, August 1869.

press. Here was a whole program, starting with its embodiment in the new legislation and finishing with its propagation in newspapers (the brochure itself being one of its products), which envisaged the achievement of “the national unity of the Ottoman Empire.” What this “national unity” meant is a question that needs a separate and detailed analysis.

“THE OTTOMAN NATION” OR “THE OTTOMAN PEOPLES”

There are different interpretations of whether the leaders of the *Tanzimat* period aimed to create “one single nation” as Akçura stated and as the national historiographies in the post-Ottoman space insist⁴³ or, more modestly, to forge a common feeling of belonging to the Ottoman State despite religious and any other differences.⁴⁴ In this respect one could discover a strange coincidence: scholars who criticize the “Ottomanist” policy claim that it intended to create “one single Ottoman nation,” while the majority of those who are, or are suspected of being pro-Turkish and pro-Ottoman usually describe it in vaguer terms. The second approach is preferred here for several reasons. First, because of the vagueness of the official discourse itself, it would be inappropriate to formulate a strong thesis. Second, it seems that the *Tanzimat* leaders were relatively pragmatic and realistic in defining their objectives in what concerns identity politics. But what is most important is that contrary to their critics, they were not thinking in national terms.

The crucial problem is that as a technical term “Ottomanism” was introduced and is now usually used by people criticizing the ideology and the policies of the *Tanzimat* leaders and for that very reason it was caricaturized. Akçura’s statement that Ottomanism was an ambition to make “one single nation” [*tek bir millet*] from the subjects of the sultan was part of a political manifesto, one may say a manipulation, which has been taken seriously by later scholars. He presented Islamism and Turkism as two feasible policies, opposed to Ottomanism as something completely unrealistic. It seems that in most cases this thesis is reproduced uncritically—due to the deficit of studies and debates on the *Tanzimat* Ottomanism the above-mentioned statement

43 Petrosyan (1975), p. 142; Safrastyan (1985); Mazhdrakova-Tchavdarova (1988), p. 82; Doganalp-Votzi, (2002), p. 61; Todev (2003), pp. 186, 196 and 202.

44 Paul Dumont in Mantran (1989), p. 497; Rahme (1999), p. 24. Some authors opt for labels like “political,” “civic” or “non-ethnocentric” nation: Adanır (1992), p. 167; *Encyclopedia of nationalism* (2000), vol. II, p. 388; see also Bülent Bilmez’s text in this volume.

remained largely unquestioned. On the other hand, at least in some cases it is done intentionally, in trying (just as Akçura did) to make the *Tanzimat* policies look unrealistic, as if these policies pursued an unachievable goal. But just like the term “Ottomanism,” the expression “one single [Ottoman] nation” is not to be found in the writings of the *Tanzimat* leaders.

By analyzing only the key notions and terms in the “Ottomanist” discourse, as some scholars already attempted, we cannot solve the question of what was the Ottoman identity made. In general, studies dealing with problems of identity in the late Ottoman Empire point out the inconsistent and even contradictory use of key words in the identity discourse (such as *millet*, nation, race, the preference for the term “Ottoman” or “Turkish,” etc.) in Ottoman Turkish, even by one and the same person.⁴⁵ In this situation, it is important to examine not so much the use of such terms, but to try to understand the political project of the *Tanzimat* leaders in its integrity. In order to find out what official policy intended, we should try to answer two main questions. First, whether the Ottoman identity was intended to replace the identification with the existing *millets*, whether differences between peoples had to disappear once the Ottoman identity was consolidated. Second, whether this “Ottoman identity” was identical with the modern notion of “nation.”

Most studies give a positive answer to the first question but usually *in passim*, without giving any arguments.⁴⁶ On the contrary, I would argue that the answer to this question should be negative. In the first place, those who discussed the problem of the “union of all peoples in the Ottoman Empire” used two different terms to name the different *millets* and the bigger union. For example, Ebüzziya Tevfik insisted that there was not and could not be any “Ottoman millet” because different *millets* and *kavims* formed one single Ottoman *ümme*t (i.e., *umma*’, the word that otherwise means “the universal Muslim community”).⁴⁷ Different terms were used in this case by the Syrian political and intellectual leader Butrus al-Bustani, who wrote about the Ottoman *umma*’, composed of many “racial” groups [*ajnas*] that had “common inter-

45 E.g., Ebüzziya Tevfik: Türesay, (2002), pp. 6–7. Two other contributions to this volume discuss these or similar contradictions: Bülent Bilmez is focusing on the inconsistent use of such terms by Şemseddin Sami, and Stefan Detchev is discussing the ambiguous use of the term “race” in late 19th-century Bulgarian texts.

46 E.g., David Kushner speaks of “‘Ottoman nation’ which would replace the old, narrow loyalty to the community...,” Kushner (1977), p. 3; See also note 43.

47 In his dictionary published in 1891: Strauss (1999), p. 24.

ests.”⁴⁸ The use of the two different terms shows clearly that the *millets*, the *kavims* or the *ajnas* on the one hand and the larger Ottoman community on the other (the Ottoman *umma*) were of a different order.

Some formulations could be confusing. In a brochure published in 1878, Midhat Paşa, the initiator of various reforms at the local level and of the 1876 constitution, wrote about “the fusion of the different races,” but the central issue in this “fusion” was the establishment of a constitutional regime.⁴⁹ For Midhat Paşa, “*la fusion entre les diverses races*” meant the achievement of political unity, the creation of a “common fatherland,” not melting in a single nation—a term he did not use. On the contrary, Midhat Paşa kept seeing Muslims and non-Muslims (and probably to a large extent “*les diverses races*”), as distinct units, participating in a larger union. Whenever Midhat initiated mixed structures, Muslims and non-Muslims had separate representation with quotas: in the local councils as well as in the mixed courts. According to his constitutional project, they had to have also quotas, for the representation in the Chamber. A very similar message is to be found in the article by Namık Kemal, “*İmtizac-ı akvam*”—the title could be translated as “fusion” but also as “the harmonizing of the populations/tribes/nations.” The advocated “fusion of the various populations of the Empire” is to be understood as some kind of political unity, inasmuch it had to be achieved through the introduction of a constitution and a new educational system.⁵⁰ The author of a short article in *Courrier d'Orient*, reproduced in *Makedoniya* (1866–1872, ed. Petko Slaveikov), was aware of the possible confusion. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, the article underlined that “the fusion” meant only “the fusion of the interests of the different peoples,” and that the fusion of the peoples themselves could happen only by a divine miracle.⁵¹

The *Tanzimat* leaders envisaged no practical steps for fusion of the diverse ethnoses into one nation. First of all, they regarded the unity of all Ottoman subjects as easily achievable through some political decisions—reform edicts of the sultan or the constitution of 1876. Some of them proposed that Muslims and non-Muslim should study together in mixed schools and should serve together in the army. Special attention deserves the much-discussed issue with

48 Abu-Manneh (1980), p. 298.

49 Midhat Pacha (1878), pp. 14 and 29. It seems that the expression “*la fusion des races*” comes from the Turkish “*ittihad-i anasır*” – “the union of the elements.”

50 *İbret*, no. 14, June 20, 1872; Rahme (1999), p. 34.

51 *Makedoniya*, III, no. 11, February 8, 1869; the same in an article reproduced in *Makedoniya*, I, no. 9, January 28, 1867 from *Gazette du Levant*.

the project for mixed schools, launched by *Tanzimat* leaders in the late 1860s. Because it was never implemented, some historians feel free to interpret it as a tool for “complete assimilation of the non-Muslims into the ruling nation.” Still, a few mixed schools were created and they could give us an idea what the authorities had intended. These are the so-called *islahhanes*—reformatory schools for orphans or delinquent children. In those in the Danube Province there were Bulgarian and Turkish teachers and separate religious lessons for Muslims and non-Muslims.⁵² The purpose was to educate the children together in order to make them all “good Ottoman subjects” not to convert them to “Muslims” and “Turks.” Otherwise, part of them had to become “good Muslims,” the others “good Christians.” The Bulgarian notables and journalists (and, following them, the Bulgarian national historiography) rejected the idea of the mixed schools, but were favorable to the *islahhanes*.

The idea of creating one Ottoman nation appeared in the Ottoman press but it was usually launched by foreigners. This was the case with the much-circulated proposal published in *La Turquie*, that the name of the state and of all its subjects should be changed to the Oriental Empire and Orientals respectively.⁵³ The editor-in-chief of the newspaper at that time was Charles Mismar, a French adventurer, turcophile, fascinated by the example of the United States.⁵⁴ He wrote later that as an editor-in-chief he enjoyed considerable liberty and called his own writings “*mes extravagances*.”⁵⁵ Nonetheless, such publications are often quoted as proving the intention of the Ottoman government to assimilate all subjects into a single nation.

In other cases the “one single nation” thesis is supported with references to post-*Tanzimat* texts, for example to Ziya Gökalp, who was saying at some point that the Ottoman nation was like the American nation.⁵⁶ It is not surprising that Gökalp, one of the “fathers of the Turkish nationalism,” should perceive the “Ottoman millet” as a modern nation. Obviously, his views could not be representative for *Tanzimat* Ottomanism and should not be used to illustrate it.

52 Kornrumpf (1983); Bakârdzhieva (2001).

53 Published also in: *Makedoniya*, II, no. 25, May 18, 1868; later severely criticized in *Narodnost/Nationalitate*, no. 14, February 23, 1869.

54 Georgeon (1992).

55 Georgeon (1992), p. 103.

56 Safrastyan (1985), p. 118.

Negative should also be the answer of the second question—whether the projected Ottoman identity corresponded to the modern notion of “nation” in its “civic” or “ethnic” understanding. Those who adopted the modern idea of the nation were inclined towards Turkish nationalism rather than to a “brotherly union of all peoples living in the Ottoman Empire.” The few who were concerned with the Turkish element of the Ottoman State, like Süleyman Paşa and Ahmed Vefik Paşa, would be praised later as precursors of Turkism. Expressions such as “the Ottoman millet” or “the Ottoman people” were occasionally used to denominate the subjects of the sultan, but the singular form in this case was used without the implied meaning of an indivisible body, nor was it excluding the existence of different peoples in the empire. The often-used expression “living like brothers” was related to the idea that there were different peoples, not a single one.

An explicit answer to the question is to be found in an article published by the famous novelist and journalist Ahmed Midhat in 1897, where he compared “Ottomanism” to the other nations and highlighted the differences. Ahmed Midhat described “*Osmanlılık*” as a rather complicated structure and finally he presented the identification with the Ottoman Empire at two levels—with the state and the dynasty on behalf of all subjects, and, in addition to it, with Islam and Turkishness on behalf of those who were Muslims and Turks.⁵⁷ Although not so popular as the clear definition given by Akçura, this one reflected much more realistically the perception of being Ottoman at two levels—narrower for the “purest Ottomans” and broader for all subjects. Moreover Ottomanism had its inner hierarchy and priorities: in “the union of the elements” (*ittihad-i anasır*) there was one “fundamental element” (*unsur-i asli*)—“the Turks and the Anatolian peoples.”⁵⁸ Equality was acceptable only to the extent it did not hurt the interests of the Muslim/Turkish element: in the Lyceum of Galatasaray “children from all classes of the Ottoman Empire” were accepted, but “at least half of them” had to be Muslim.⁵⁹

If one looks for a larger comparative perspective, Ottomanism of the *Tanzimat* period could be compared with the identity politics in the Habsburg and in the Russian Empire at that time, instead of trying to assimilate it to different types of “civic” or “political nationalism” in Western Europe or Northern America. In the former cases the imperial administration was aware of the

57 Kushner (1977), p. 40. The article is “Osmanlılığımızın başka Milliyetlere Adem-i Müşahabeti” in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*; no 5881, September 13, 1897.

58 Deringil (1998), p. 59 quoting a report by Osman Nuri Paşa of 1885.

59 “Reglement Organique de Lycée Imperial,” art. 5 in: Aristarchi (1874), vol III, p. 317.

existence of different groups with their own identity, elite, traditions and national aspirations and the aim was to achieve certain cohesion of all subjects without trying to melt the different groups into “one nation.” In all these empires one could see the dominant position of one community (and even two in the Habsburg Empire, especially after 1867) but at the same time the central power was ready to make concessions to other religious, linguistic or national communities in order to appease and to attract them. Therefore a term like “imperial supranationalism” would be more helpful for describing the Ottomanist policy during the *Tanzimat* period.⁶⁰

“REGARDLESS OF RELIGION AND SECT...”

If the political and intellectual leaders of the *Tanzimat* were not preoccupied with the nation and ethnicity, they insisted on religion. In legal and political texts the differences between the subjects were classified in one category, although expressed with two words “religion and sect” [*din ve mezheb*]. This is crucial for understanding how the Muslim-Turkish statesmen, state officials, intellectuals and journalists of the *Tanzimat* period perceived individual and collective identity. In contemporary texts in other languages and in later studies the reference to “religion and sect” [*din ve mezheb*] is often translated as “religion and nation.” In a high style Ottoman Turkish very often two words are used to say one and the same thing. Translators usually make the effort to find synonyms, in order to preserve these constructions, but here the translation of “sect” into “nation” makes visible an important difference in the way of thinking. For those who were translating, people differed not only in religion, but also in nationality.

Even without translating in a different language Yusuf Akçura changed the initial meaning of the phrase, when he wrote that Sultan Mahmud II and his followers believed in the possibility to transform the populations varying in race and religion into one single nation.⁶¹ Sultan Mahmud II, as it could be seen from the same paragraph of Akçura’s text, had in mind only people of different *faiths*, without referring at all to race [*ırk*] or anything similar to it (tribe, nation, people of different origin, etc.). The expression “one single nation” [*tek bir millet*] is also added by Akçura.

⁶⁰ Findley (1982b).

⁶¹ Akçura (1976), p. 20: “devletin ırk ve dini farklı tebaasını serbestlik ve müsavât ile, emniyet ve karşılıklı dostluk ile mez ve terkip edip tek bir millet haline sokmanın imkânına inanıyorlardı.”

Some contemporary scholars, who claim that the *Tanzimat* leaders aimed at a complete fusion of the different peoples into one Ottoman nation, support their thesis with the argument that in the envisaged Ottoman unity *only one* difference was to remain—religion. One has to take into account, that if religion was the most important identity marker for the *Tanzimat* leaders, this “single difference” was a crucial one. The reforms were not aiming at a “civic nation” where religion would not count any longer. Religious division was something basic for the statesmen and the intellectuals in the 19th-century Ottoman Empire. Ottoman legislation was constantly referring to “Muslims/non-Muslims”; population statistics always presented population figures subdivided into the same two categories “Muslims and non-Muslims” (in some cases giving more detailed picture, counting separately Jews, Armenians, etc.). Official texts only rarely mentioned that subjects differed not only in faith, but also in language and nationality: such examples are to be found at one place in the 1856 Reform Edict and, surprisingly, in the opening speech of Abdulhamid II to the first Ottoman parliament. Difference in nationality was not mentioned in the 1876 Constitution, nor in the answer of the Parliament to the opening speech of the sultan.

The Ottoman leaders identified the state mostly with its Islamic component. Even a modernizer such as Midhat Paşa perceived and presented religion as a more important identity marker than language, race or origin. In the above-quoted brochure of 1878 he described the Muslim-Turkish population in the Bulgarian provinces as “*Musulmans Bulgares*.”⁶² In Midhat Paşa’s logic, since they were Muslims, the territories they inhabited had to remain within the Ottoman Empire in case of secession of a Bulgarian Principality.

FAITHFUL TO THE STATE, FAITHFUL TO THE COMMUNITY

One of the main characteristics of the *Tanzimat* edition of the idea of Ottoman unity is that it envisaged a double loyalty—to the state and to one of the (religious) communities. Regulations for the non-Muslim millets (the so-called *constitutions*) required from the spiritual leaders of the non-Muslims fidelity both to their respective millet and to the Ottoman State.⁶³ The semi-official *La*

62 Midhat Pacha (1878), p. 21: “*ce sont des descendants des Bulgares convertis à l’Islamisme... ce sont les enfants d’un même pays, d’une même race, sortis de la même souche.*”

63 *Düstur* (1290=1873/4), II, p. 969: the members of the spiritual councils to the Orthodox Church had to be “faithful to and loving their state and their millet” (*devlete ve millette sadık ve*

Turquie praised a certain Gheorghi Bey, an Istanbul-based Bulgarian (most probably Gheorgaki Çaloğlu/Tcholakov) who did not differentiate between Bulgarian and Turkish patriotism.⁶⁴ Editorials in the Bulgarian newspapers published in Istanbul insisted that they would serve simultaneously the interest of the Bulgarian people (in some cases the Bulgarian Church was also mentioned) and of the state and/or the sultan.⁶⁵ In other cases they advocated the coincidence between the interests of the Bulgarian people and the throne, arguing that the stability and the prosperity of the Ottoman State was in the best interest of the Bulgarian people.⁶⁶

In some cases one could also see tactically motivated usages of the “Ottomanist” discourse. For instance, the group of radical Bulgarian emigrants, who organized a military band that entered the empire in July 1868, prepared also a memoir to the sultan where they referred to the “double interests,” i.e., the coinciding interests of the Ottoman Empire and the Bulgarian people. In fact, the organizers of this political and military action demonstrated their ability to use both the national discourse (in the appeal to the Bulgarian population) and the “Ottomanist” discourse (in the memoir to the sultan).⁶⁷

Even more compelling are the examples of combining the “two patriotisms” given by the openly *turcophile* newspapers—notorious with their loyalty to the state, they demonstrated also an outspoken Bulgarian nationalism. The newspaper *Turtziya* (1864–1873, ed. Nikola Genovitch) had the subtitle “newspaper in the interests of the people” [*vestnik za interesiti na narodât*] which became more precise in 1869: “newspaper in the interests of the Bulgarian people” [*vestnik za interesiti na bâlgarskia narod*]. In this way *Turtziya* presented itself with a subtitle very similar to the subtitle of the previously published newspaper *Bâlgariya* (1859–1863, ed. Dragan Tzankov), which used to be “newspaper for the Bulgarian interests” [*vestnik za bâlgarskite interesi*]. Usually mentioned in connection with its pro-Turkish and pro-governmental positions, *Turtziya* was at the same time abounding in examples of Bulgarian nationalism and in many cases it was aggressively defending Bul-

muhib); similar regulations were envisaged for the spiritual leader of the Jewish community, the so-called Hahambashi: “*devletçe ve milletçe şayan-i emniyet ve itimad bulunan*” (*ibid.*, p. 962).

64 Quoted after *Narodnost*/*Naționalitate*, no. 14, February 23, 1869.

65 *Tzarigradski vestnik*, no. 484, June 25, 1860; *Vek* (1874–1876, ed. Marko Balabanov), Editorial, no. 1, January 12, 1874; *ibid.*, no. 1, January 4, 1875.

66 *Istochno Vreme*, Bulgarian edition of *The Levant Times*: Editorial N 1, January 12, 1874.

67 Published both in: Kasabov (1905), pp. 114–118 (in Bulgarian) and Refik (1341=1922/3), pp. 153–156 (in Ottoman Turkish).

garian interests by anti-Greek, anti-Romanian or anti-Serbian writings. An article rejecting any possibility of a union between the Bulgarians and the Romanians insisted that “the wise, honest and patriotic Bulgarian people” would never accept living under Romanian administration and ended pathetically with the appeal “For the sake of preserving our honor, let us remain forever Bulgarians!!”⁶⁸ The same newspaper published an article preaching for “the fusion of all Bulgarian populations of the Ottoman Empire.”⁶⁹ It fervently praised Christianity and, in an article combating atheism, it argued that science was “profoundly Christian” and that “all the greatest scientists were Christians.”⁷⁰ Contemporary scholars trying to prove that the leading *turcophiles* among the Bulgarians were in fact true Bulgarian patriots easily find evidence to support this thesis.⁷¹

It should be added that anti-Greek or anti-Serbian writings, such as those that appeared in *Turtziya*, corresponded at the same time to the Ottoman foreign policy and to the interests of the national movements of some of the peoples living within the empire like the Bulgarians and the Albanians (to mention only cases in the Balkans). The *Tanzimat* propaganda for Ottoman patriotism and unity was trying to incorporate and appease nationalisms, not to oppose them openly. Bulgarian or Albanian nationalism were to a large extent compatible with “Ottomanism” and vice versa. “The fusion of the interests” was not necessarily an empty phrase.

TANZIMAT PROPAGANDA IN TRANSLATION

The fact that *Tanzimat* Ottomanism envisaged a double loyalty, that it allowed self-identification not only with the state but also with a specific community is reflected also in the multilingual propaganda of that time. The first priority was to make the propaganda understandable, and newspapers and magazines editors made efforts to write in simple and comprehensible language. In addition, the propaganda was addressed not only to a multireligious and multiethnic but obviously also a multilingual public and the authorities did their best to reach this public. Already the first official newspaper of the Ottoman State, *Takvim-i vekai*, was designed as a multilingual one. The authorities began to

68 *Turtziya*, no. 4, March 15, 1869.

69 *Turtziya*, no. 44, December 20, 1869.

70 *Turtziya*, no. 2, March 2, 1869.

71 Todev (1999); Todev (2003).

publish separate editions of the newspaper in different languages: first and most durably in French (*Le Moniteur Ottoman*), that had to serve the tasks of propaganda abroad and among foreigners at home, as well as among subjects who knew French. For internal use some newspaper issues were published also in Greek, Armenian, Arab or even Persian translations.⁷² This policy took a much more developed form in the provincial (*vilayet*) newspapers. Approximately half of them were published in Turkish and, parallel to it, in the other most used language of the province—Arab, Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian or Serbian. Some *vilayet* newspapers were published (at least for some time) in three (*Edirne*) or even four languages (*Selanik*). In many *vilayets*, mainly in Anatolia and in the “Albanian” *vilayets* in the Balkans, the official newspapers were published only in Turkish.⁷³

Comparison between the original and the translated texts in these bilingual editions makes visible the impossibility of creating a common “Ottoman” identity for all subjects.⁷⁴ In the case of the Bulgarian translations “Muslims,” and in many cases also “Ottomans,” was usually translated simply as “Turks,” the “Sublime State” [*Devlet-i Aliye*], i.e., the Ottoman Empire, as “Turkey,” etc. In some cases the text was intentionally modified and “adapted” according to the deeply rooted stereotypes of the respective public—Muslims or non-Muslims. For example in a Turkish text the “army” could be praised as the “glorious and sacred Muslim army” [*şan ve şerifi muslim olan asker*] but it appeared in the Bulgarian translation without any adjective.⁷⁵

Still, one should not look only for the failures in the “translations.” The main messages of the official propaganda such as those about the fatherland and the sultan, about the common interests and against foreign influences could be successfully transmitted via non-Turkish texts. Even for the non-Turkish nationalists, there was no reason to object to a large part of the writings in the official press—the ideas of equality, justice, education and prosperity were shared dreams, even if there were many disappointments with respect to their realization. The opposition to “foreign” interests and interventions was also part of a wide consensus.

Clear cases when the Turkish language was considered an identity marker were relatively rare at that time and the authorities insisted only on the practical need to know it. For example the law on the provincial city councils de-

72 Koloğlu (1982), pp. 32–43; Yazıcı (1983), pp. 51–65.

73 Varlık (1985); Kocabaşoğlu, Birinci (1995).

74 See in this regard the pioneering work of Johann Strauss: Strauss (2002).

75 *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 486, June 24, 1870.

mandated that its members should be able to express themselves in Turkish (*türkçe tekmlil edebilmek*).⁷⁶ The text of the 1876 Constitution (art. 18) that is often quoted as “declaring Turkish as the official language”⁷⁷ in fact demanded its knowledge for appointments in the state administration. To a certain extent this was probably a manoeuvre, but the 20th-century obsession with the Turkish language was still ahead of the *Tanzimat* politicians.

One of the first fields where the preeminence of the Turkish language was underlined was education. Even in the Lyceum of Galatasaray, the first among the subjects of the curriculum was Turkish.⁷⁸ The Turkish language was introduced as a subject in non-Muslim schools with the Education Law of 1869 and later regulations reinforced this requirement.⁷⁹ The role of the non-Turkish languages began to decrease even as a propaganda tool. Bilingualism of the local press proved to be of transitory nature and already in the 1880s there was a trend of renouncing the second language in the *vilayet* newspapers. In this way, already under Abdulhamid II, Ottomanist propaganda became not only more Islamist, but also more “Turkish.”

REJECTING AND ... ACCEPTING OTTOMANISM

Even if Ottomanism was “still born” politically,⁸⁰ even if it was a “complete failure in the European provinces,”⁸¹ it survived intellectually. Arguments, phrases and clichés invented by the official propaganda of the *Tanzimat* period have survived to the present day. One could detect it in the “Ottomanist” anachronisms pervading many works on Ottoman history. Thus, a popular version of the Turkish national historiography claims that the different peoples lived “for centuries under the same roof without any problem” and even “like brothers,” however, due mainly to foreign interventions, they had suddenly turned into enemies.⁸² In fact things happened in the opposite order—

76 Art. 18 of the *Vilayet belediye kanunu* from 27 N 1294, *Düstur*, (1299=1881/2), vol. IV, p. 538.

77 Gencer (1978).

78 “Reglement Organique de Lycée Imperial” (Galatasay), art. 4, in: Aristarchi (1874), vol. III, p. 316.

79 Kushner (1977), p. 93.

80 Ortaylı (1999), p. 154.

81 *Encyclopedia of nationalism*..., 2000, vol. II, p. 388.

82 “aynı çatı altında yüzyıllarca sorunsuz yaşamış halkların kanlı-bıçaklı düşman haline gelmeleri...”: http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/yayin/osmanli/arsivciliktarihi/00003_sunus.htm

massacres following attempts at achieving political independence took place first and, in an effort to prevent them, the discourse about the Ottoman brotherhood was forged. In such a way, even if Turkish nationalism had defeated and replaced “Ottomanism” politically, the idealized interpretation of the Ottoman past in a big part of the present day Turkish historiography still makes use of the clichés of the Ottomanist propaganda.

I would even go further and argue that Ottomanism exercised a certain influence on the national doctrines it sought to combat. The differences between the national doctrines elaborated within and outside the Ottoman space should not be overestimated, because the role of the emigration in the national movements made the differences between these two types of cases less pronounced. Still a comparison between national doctrines forged outside the Ottoman space (the Greek *Megali idea* or the Serbian *Nacertanije*) and within it (among Bulgarians, Albanians, Macedonians) could be insightful in this sense. One could detect some influences of the Ottoman propaganda in the latter cases, particularly the presence of “Ottomanist” rhetoric in the Bulgarian, Macedonian or Albanian national discourses (such as insistence on equality, justice, tolerance, different nations and faiths living like brothers, etc).⁸³ Obviously catchwords like “brotherhood,” “equality” and “justice” appeared in many contexts, various national movements included. However in many cases almost identical phrases turn up in the “Ottomanist” and the national discourses, the former most probably serving as a source for the latter.

The case of Vasil Levski (1837–1873), the most important leader of the Bulgarian independence movement, could illustrate the argument. In his letters and a few other writings one finds expressions on equality, brotherhood between different peoples and universality of law, that almost literally coincide with the formulas used in the official Ottoman discourse. Levski described the final goal of the Bulgarian national revolution in words that sound very similar to the Ottomanist propaganda: “The Turkish *çorbacılık* (here in the meaning of arbitrary governance) should give place to the consent, the brotherhood and the perfect equality (*sâglasieto, bratstvoto i sâvârshenoto ravenstvo*) between Bulgarians, Turks, Jews, etc. *mezdu bâlgari, turtzi, evrei i pr.*”⁸⁴ The beginning of the phrase left aside, the rest could be found in contemporary official or pro-governmental newspapers. “The consent, the brotherhood and the perfect equality” between different peoples reminds some of

83 See Tchavdar Marinov’s contribution in this volume.

84 Quoted after: Simeonova (2003), p. 618.

the most popular clichés of the official propaganda. In a letter to Lyuben Karavelov (January 28, 1871) Levski wrote that “Bulgarians, Turks, Jews, etc. will be equal in rights [...] all will be under one universal law.”⁸⁵ Contrary to other national leaders, especially to those living in Romania, Levski never made anti-Jewish remarks.⁸⁶ On other occasions too Levski underlined the principle of the universality of the law, irrespective of nationality. In another letter to Karavelov (July 25, 1872) he said that the goal of the Bulgarian revolutionary organization was “brotherhood with everybody” regardless of “faith and nationality” [*bratstvo sâ sekigo, bez da gledame na viara i na narodnost*].⁸⁷ Brotherhood was professed in precisely these terms by the official Ottoman press. The expression “regardless of faith and nationality” is the usual translation in Bulgarian of “*din ve mezheb bakılmayarak*” [regardless of religion and sect].⁸⁸ Surprisingly at first glance, such parallels show that the political adversaries of the Ottoman Empire adopted what they found acceptable in its official propaganda.

Similarities are not limited to mere phrasing. Levski shared many views expressed by the *turcophiles*, especially when pleading for the independence of the Bulgarian national movement from foreign states and interests. In this regard he severely criticized and opposed the *émigrés* in Bucharest.⁸⁹ It is not a coincidence that Levski’s ideas had much greater impact on the moderate Bulgarian elite, than the newspapers of the radical emigration. As a consequence, he managed to attract in the revolutionary committees many local notables, who otherwise were also members of the local administrative councils and mixed courts.

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In conclusion, let us stress again that “Ottomanism” is a technical term describing the identity politics of the *Tanzimat* leaders, an analytical tool that should be used with precaution. Although well-known, the concept has its cognitive limits. It would be misleading to talk about a “doctrine of Ottomanism” as something coherent and to discuss seriously who and to what extent was accepting it, given the fact that no such doctrine had been formulated

85 Simeonova (2003), p. 208.

86 Todorova (1995).

87 Simeonova (2003), p. 73.

88 E.g.: *Makedoniya*, no. 11, February 11, 1867.

89 Genchev (1987), pp. 89–90.

during the *Tanzimat* period. To consider “the union of the elements,” “the fusion of the interests” or “the different peoples living in harmony” as an ambition to make “one single Ottoman nation” is an over-interpretation. The occasional use of the expression “Ottoman nation/Ottoman *millet*” has been intentionally transformed only in later nationalist interpretations into “one single Ottoman nation.” Authorities never aimed to create such a nation and there is no reason to claim that they had “failed” in this regard. It is easy to see the root of all these anachronisms—the term “Ottomanism” was introduced by people thinking in national terms. The same is true for the majority of the scholars who studied it. Many of them use the very notion of “one single Ottoman nation” as a means to discredit the *Tanzimat* project and/or the Ottoman Empire.

Another source of confusion is the parallel existence of different discourses about the future of the peoples in the Ottoman Empire during the *Tanzimat* era. Some foreigners at that time suggested that the Ottoman State could be strengthened only by melting all its subjects into one nation. State authorities and their propaganda were not only more cautious and realistic in what concerns the practical implementation of such a project—they were reluctant to accept the very concept of nation. The *turcophiles* among the Christians were seeing Ottoman unity as a supranational union, as a compromise serving their own nation or community. In this polyphony some contemporary scholars have chosen to discern only one voice—the one that is closer to their own perception of identity in terms of nations.

Another basis for misinterpretation is that the *Tanzimat* project for promoting the unity of all Ottoman subjects was anything but coherent. The official propaganda during the *Tanzimat* era was based on universal values like equality, justice and tolerance. But when the promoters of “Ottomanism” had to answer the question of who they were, the answer was “Muslim” and later increasingly “Muslim and Turk.” In “the Union of the Elements” this was “the Fundamental Element.” Non-Muslims who were accepting the idea of preserving and even strengthening the Ottoman Empire presented themselves as Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians and Jews. A few months after the 1908 Revolution these two types of understanding of “Ottomanism”—as an attachment to the state and a union of different peoples and as an identification with Islam and Turkishness—clashed. Already at that time, in the debate with the newly-born Turkish nationalism, the advocates of “Ottomanism” gradually adopted the way of thinking and the vocabulary of the nationalists.

As for the non-Muslims, they did not adopt the self-identification of “Ottomans” and only for practical reasons (taxation, property rights) the status of

“Ottoman subject” gradually became important. At the same time, during the *Tanzimat* era many non-Muslims began to refer to the Ottoman State as fatherland, and ordinary people demonstrated clear interest and attachment to the person of the reigning sultan. It was not “the nation” or “the people” but the state and the monarch that were the linking elements in *Tanzimat* Ottomanism.

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THE PEOPLE INCORPORATED

Constructions of the Nation in Transylvanian Romanian Liberalism, 1838–1848

KINGA-KORETTA SATA

INTRODUCTION

The existence of a specific Transylvanian Romanian liberalism, either in the sense of being a fully-fledged movement, or only a more or less clear-cut affective community of individual theorists and politicians, is not taken for granted by the national historiographies of 19th-century Transylvania, either Hungarian or Romanian. The theorists and activists that this paper groups under the heading of Transylvanian Romanian national liberals are most commonly described as members of the national movement in Transylvania, that is, the movement that fought for the emancipation of the Romanian people in Transylvania.

It is the argument of this paper, however, that the identity politics devised by the theorists discussed cannot be understood without taking seriously their allegiance to the liberal project of modernity (and modernization) besides their commitment to the national cause. They themselves thought that the two projects, liberal modernization (and its economic corollary, capitalism) and national emancipation were not only reinforcing each other, but could not be conceived of separately. It is this apparently paradoxical concatenation of a progressive and a conservative idiom of political thought, liberalism and nationalism, that the present paper intends to describe through a reconstruction of the Transylvanian Romanian version of liberal identity-building, both political-institutional and cultural.¹

The study consists partly of a conceptual history of the central notions employed by these theorists in their constructions of the “people,” which for them was the sole legitimate basis of politics, and attempts at least a partial reconstruction of the “language”² of Transylvanian Romanian national liberalism in which these concepts were employed in its formative period, 1838–

1 That is why these theorists can veritably be identified as “national liberals” or “liberal nationalists,” to stress their allegiance to both 19th-century liberalism and nationalism. For the latter version of identification, see Dénes (2006).

2 In the sense used by Pocock (1987), pp. 19–38.

1848. The Transylvanian Romanian liberals articulated their nation-building project within the larger framework of the composite Habsburg monarchy, and the closer context of the multiethnic Transylvania, thus their nation-building had to encounter the similar projects of the more powerful national groups within the same province and empire. It was shaped by these encounters; and itself exerted a formative influence on the other projects, especially in Transylvania. This reconstruction outlines some of the external discursive and theoretical influences, from Western Europe and particularly the closer neighbors: the Hungarians (both Transylvanian and from Hungary proper) and the Germans (both Transylvanian Saxons and Austrian Germans). The Romanian national liberal political project had a territorial focus distinct from the similar projects of the Hungarians and Germans: it concentrated exclusively on a Transylvania defined as a genuine self-sufficient *patria*, while the cultural-linguistic nation-building project operated in terms of a unitary Romanianism, joining together Romanians from the two Danubian principalities, Transylvania and Hungary. It is this discrepancy in the territorial and ethno-national scope that makes Transylvanian Romanian national liberal identity politics an appealing case for study, it being still capable of merging pre-nationalism patriotism, demanding loyalty to a multi-ethnic entity and fully-fledged cultural nationalism in a coherent political project, a situation that dramatically changes after the 1848 revolution.

The present study intends to assess Transylvanian Romanian liberal identity-building through a comparison with the similar project of its immediate discursive and geographical neighbor, Hungarian national liberalism, owing to the fact that the Transylvanian Romanians saw this idiom as being their immediate challenger. The relationship of the two national liberalisms was an ambiguous one: Hungarian liberals had a program of economic and political modernization that had very much in common with what the Romanian liberals envisaged as necessary, but the Hungarian project of liberal nation-building put forward aims that were perceived by the Romanians as critical threats to their own national project. There is a certain interpenetration of the two national liberal idioms; it is not the case that the transfer of ideas was a one-way process; though the Romanians paid more attention to the Hungarian liberals (as these were the representatives of the dominant nationality and the dominant policy-making actors in the context of Transylvania or Hungary), the Hungarian liberals were also considering Romanian reactions and sometimes demands.

The reconstruction of the Transylvanian Romanian national liberal project is based on the analysis of the only Romanian language journal edited in pre-

1848 Transylvania, the *Gazeta de Transilvania* [Transylvanian Gazette] and its literary supplement, the *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură* [Journal for Mind, Soul and Literature],³ from their first issue in March 1838 until the outbreak of the 1848 revolution. The editor and main contributor of the journal in this period, George Bariț (1812–1893), is widely acknowledged as a prominent figure in the Romanian national emancipation movement throughout his long life. His reputation was augmented precisely by his being the editor of the *Gazeta* and its major contributor way beyond 1849, when he was forced to renounce the editorship.

While it might seem obvious that a study of 19th-century Transylvanian Romanian ideas should focus on the single political journal of the period, it is not obvious why this journal can be considered a depository of national liberalism; being the only one, it might have aimed at collecting all the available versions of Romanian public discourse.⁴ My argument for considering this journal to be the organ of national liberalism is that it was written mainly by Bariț and his closest associates,⁵ and that the views expressed by these authors in their writings are recognizably in line with the liberal project of modernity on the one hand, and the project of nation-building and national emancipation on the other.⁶ Also supporting this claim is the fact that when other Romanian journals started to be published (the first of these was Timotei Cipariu's short-lived *Organul luminării* [Organ of Enlightenment] in 1847, followed by *Telegraful român* [Romanian Telegraph] in 1853), these were ideologically differ-

3 As these two periodicals will be extensively quoted, I will only use shorter titles to identify them: *Gazeta* and *Foaie* respectively.

4 This is actually what the journal declared to be its intention. Nevertheless, there was selection among the texts sent to the journal by the editor, and Bariț sometimes openly acknowledged the fact, and the criteria for selecting.

5 It is sometimes hard to identify the exact authors of articles in the journal, as it was not customary to sign them in the beginning. Signing them became more frequent around 1842, especially in the literary supplement. Then we can identify writers on social and political matters (besides Bariț, who still writes by far the most of such articles); among them, most importantly, the poet Andrei Mureșanu, his brother Iacob Mureșanu, and the high-school teacher Ioan Maiorescu (father of the central figure of Romanian conservatism, Titu Maiorescu).

6 It is important to note that to be conservative in the Hungarian case could have only meant being a supporter of the central Viennese government and its ideological corollaries: absolutism; centralization; Germanization. For such an appreciation see Dénes (2006), pp. 155–196; Dénes (1989). In the Transylvanian Romanian case, however, being in favor of modernization (i.e., being liberal) could still be associated with absolute loyalty to the Habsburgs, and implicitly to Viennese central government.

ent from the earlier *Gazeta*; one can even argue that it is precisely when compared to these journals that the liberalism of the *Gazeta* becomes unmistakable.

SOURCES OF ROMANIAN NATIONAL LIBERALISM

Mapping external influences in the case of the articles published in the Romanian journal has to start with the indication of sources present in the journal itself. In the period immediately following its first issue in March 1838, the *Gazeta* only presented news items without commentaries, grouped by location: first the news from Transylvania, then those from Hungary, Austria, the Danubian principalities, ending with the rest of Europe (and, sometimes, the world). In the case of these specific news items there was almost always a precise indication of their source: mainly German language journals, as well as French and British journals quoted through the German journals. If the news concerned Hungary or the Hungarians in Transylvania, usually the journals of Budapest (not only the liberal ones), and the Hungarian liberal journal published in Cluj, the *Erdélyi Híradó* [Transylvanian Newspaper], were customarily referred to. It was only in 1842 that new types of articles began to appear: commentaries on specific events or questions of general interest. For my analysis, this latter type is of real interest, but it is important to note that there are valuable comments within the seemingly simple recordings of news as well.

The most prominent “Western” source for the *Gazeta*, which was the fountain-head of especially the more analytical articles published there, was the Bavarian *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*. This periodical was acknowledged by both contemporaries and later commentators⁷ alike as the journal secretly financed by the Austrian government, thus voicing its political agenda. Nevertheless, the *Augsburger* managed to keep at least a semi-independent stance towards its sponsor, this being also the intention of the Viennese government, as in this way it could be a reliable journal for the non-Austrian German and wider Western European public, while still supporting the viewpoint of the Austrian government at the same time.⁸ The *Gazeta* took over from the *Augsburger* not only the majority of its news about Germany, France or Britain, but

⁷ See, for example, the appreciation given by Cheresteşiu (1917), p. 23.

⁸ For a comparative consideration of the German press in the period and an assessment of the role of the *Augsburger*, see Green (2001).

also numerous commentaries concerning Hungary and Transylvania, or Eastern Europe, especially the Ottoman Empire, including Wallachia and Moldavia. These commentaries were also reflecting the viewpoint of the Austrian government. Moreover, the same Austrian viewpoint can be identified as influencing some of the theoretical articles dealing with more abstract matters of interest, seemingly unconnected to the immediate concerns of Austria.⁹ Besides the *Augsburger*, Viennese journals such as *Adler* and especially the official paper, the *Österreichische Beobachter*, were often cited for their news. The preference given to these journals by the editor and publisher of the *Gazeta* explains in part why the Romanian liberals were such staunch advocates of imperial nationalism.¹⁰

IN THE MIRROR OF HUNGARIAN NATIONAL LIBERALISM

Though Transylvania and Hungary before 1848 were administratively distinct within the Austrian monarchy, there were no significant differences culturally or linguistically between the Hungarians in Transylvania and in Hungary. Moreover, Hungarian reformers were already engaged in the building of the unitary Hungarian nation, which manifestly included the Hungarians of Transylvania way before the 1830s. Thus, by the time of the emergence of Romanian liberalism in Transylvania in the 1830s, speaking of a single Hungarian cultural nation was long established in public parlance. As a consequence, the Romanian journal also considered Hungarian liberalism unitary, because the Transylvanian liberal discourse thematized the same issues in roughly the same manner as the one in Hungary in the 1830s and 1840s. Most of its scholars consider that it borrowed almost everything it thematized from the liberal discourse in Hungary.¹¹

9 See, for instance, the article on the proper definition and theoretical understanding of nationality, published, however, in the midst of the bitter dispute over the language question in the Transylvanian diet in 1842 and a similar dispute in Hungary over Széchenyi's criticism of Hungarian nationalism voiced around the same time, and keenly taken over by the Romanian journal: "Pentru naționalitate", [For nationality] *Gazeta*, 1842, 16, pp. 61–63; 17, pp. 65–66.

10 They did not actually have much choice, taking into account censorship and the scarcity of resources. The same sources, however, could have been used in a more critical manner (as was the case with the Hungarian liberal press, for instance).

11 This is, of course, not very surprising given the fact that Miklós Wesselényi, the leader of the Hungarian reformers (liberals) in the 1830s in the Hungarian public space (mainly the diets), also participated in Transylvanian political life as a Transylvanian magnate. But, this is

The communication between the Hungarian and Romanian liberals was somewhat asymmetrical, the Romanians being more attentive to and echoing the views of the Hungarians than vice versa. An important question in the assessment of the Romanian liberals' relations to Hungarian liberalism is whether they were informed of the specific agenda of the Hungarian liberals as compared to the conservatives. From the references in the Romanian journal it is obvious that the Romanian editors were keenly interested and aware of the different trends of opinion in Hungarian politics. They knew and discussed the theoretical works founding Hungarian liberalism (especially István Széchenyi's *oeuvre*), but also the conservative reaction to those. The Romanian journal also readily reflected the liberals' day-to-day political struggles and internal debates through the presentation of the more important articles published in various journals in Hungary or Transylvania.¹²

If we follow Miklós Szabó's typology of Hungarian liberalism, which differentiates between the aristocratic and the more radical gentry liberalism¹³ (the latter trend being epitomized by Miklós Wesselényi and Lajos Kossuth), the Romanian liberals' unambiguous preference was for the views characteristic of Hungarian aristocratic liberalism, especially as advocated by Széchenyi, against both the gentry liberalism prevailing among Hungarian liberals and conservatism. It is important to note, however, that it was only in the early 1840s that these versions of Hungarian liberalism openly and sharply diverged: the differences of opinion on issues relating to the Hungarian nation-building agenda between the two emblematic figures of Hungarian liberalism, Kossuth and Széchenyi, demarcated two increasingly antagonistic camps.

not only true for the liberals: one of the leading conservatives, Samu Jósika, acted in the same manner in both contexts. Bariț himself retrospectively considered this to be the case: he emphasized the role played by Wesselényi in the liberal opposition in both Hungary and Transylvania, and also argued that the Transylvanian Hungarian liberals took their inspiration from Hungary. See Bariț (1889–1891), vol. 1, pp. 574, 577.

12 See the discussion of Széchenyi's *Hitel* [Credit], for example: "Privre asupra industriei și a negoțului în Ungaria, Transilvania, Moldova, Țara Românească și Serbia" [Considerations on the industry and commerce in Hungary, Transylvania, Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia] *Gazeta* 1838, II, 22, pp. 85–88. The dispute over Széchenyi's *Kelet népe* [People of the East], very important in clarifying the ideas of Hungarian liberals and conservatives alike concerning the national question, was also keenly followed in the *Gazeta*. See "Când va fi Transilvania tare și fericită?" [When will Transylvania be strong and happy?] *Gazeta* 1841, 37, p. 145; 'Ungaria' [Hungary] *Gazeta* 1841, 48, pp. 190–191; "Ungaria. Jurnalistică," [Hungary. Journalism] *Gazeta* 1843, 1, p. 1. The Pulszky–Thun debate was also discussed: 'Peșta' [Pest] *Gazeta* 1843, 25, p. 98.

13 See Szabó (2006), pp. 197–238; especially 200–211.

Although there were other points of divergence between the two main groups of liberals, the single most important issue of disagreement by the early 1840s was “Magyarization,” that is, the extent and modes of assimilation that was desirable and acceptable in order to construct a Hungarian nation-state.¹⁴ It is important to note, however, that all Hungarian liberals were assimilationist, it was only the means, the timing and the extent of necessary Magyarization that was disputed.

It is exactly their being assimilationist that made Hungarian liberals intolerable to the more radical Romanian nationalists, like Simion Bărnuțiu. For him, all the charming proposals advanced by the Hungarians were designed to conceal the actual aim: the denationalization of the Romanians and their consequent turning into Hungarians. Thus, Bărnuțiu rejected the totality of the Hungarian liberal offer and declared that the Romanians were better off without any change in their circumstances, as they could still remain Romanians.¹⁵ Bariț on the other hand was not prepared to discard the whole of Hungarian liberalism; though he himself repeatedly declared that the forced assimilation of the Romanians was unacceptable (and, he argued, impracticable), the emancipation of the (Romanian) serfs and the economic and political modernization proposed by the Hungarian liberals was in the best interests of the Romanian masses. In this context, Bariț’s preference among the Hungarian liberals was for the less radically Magyarizing and less democratic aristocratic liberals and their leader, Széchenyi. The unquestionable loyalty of the aristocratic liberals towards the imperial house and government also predisposed the Romanian liberals, themselves strong supporters of Vienna, to insist on this specific version of Hungarian liberalism.

PECULIARITIES OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN ROMANIAN ADAPTATION OF NATIONAL LIBERALISM

This part tries to reconstruct the identity discourse of Romanian national liberalism by contrasting its major thematizations to the stances adopted by Hungarian national liberals, because I believe that Transylvanian Romanian

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion of the different liberal standpoints in Hungary, see Schlett (1999), pp. 81–121, 167–181.

¹⁵ See his 1842 writing *O tocmeală de rușine și o lege nedreaptă* [A shameful deal and an unjust law], as well as his emblematic 1848 *Discursul de la Blaj* [Discourse of Blaj]. Both in Chindriș (1998), pp. 45–54, 78–112.

national liberalism is comprehensible only in and through its dialogue with Hungarian liberalism. Of course, a similar comparatist endeavor could also be undertaken in relation to the Wallachian and Moldavian Romanian liberalisms. What sets apart the Transylvanian Romanian theorists from their Wallachian and Moldavian peers is their involvement in a separate political and discursive field, their discourse considering problems relating to the situation in the Habsburg monarchy, different in every possible aspect from those of the Danubian principalities. On the other hand, there is a close connection in this sense between Transylvanian Romanian and Hungarian national liberalism, both being rooted in the same political space of the Austrian empire, within the same discursive field. The Romanian theorists from all the three different states, however, employ a unitary discourse on Romanian culture and language, that is, the building of the Romanian cultural nation, but with no or little reference to political issues. As this study considers the political construction of identity, the “Hungarian connection” seemed more important. It is significant that the Transylvanian Romanians also share with the Hungarians their political and theoretical sources by virtue of having access to roughly the same political literature, which was available as a consequence of Austrian censorship and also due to their similar linguistic competence, this again setting them apart from the Wallachians and Moldavians.

ECONOMIC DEFINITION OF THE *PATRIA*

An enthusiasm for economic modernization and a search for the best ways to achieve it characterizes both Hungarian and Romanian national liberal discourses. The motivation for the economic discourse was the construction of an economically sustainable homeland for the political projects. Hungarian and Romanian liberals argued that free trade was in principle all right, though state protection for home industry was needed, if the territory did not want to become the victim of the economic imperialism of the great industrial nations of Europe. The defining reference was the notion of “national economy” advanced by Friedrich List, and the German corresponding institution of the *Zollverein* and its *de facto* functioning.

The difference between the two liberal discourses was in the definition of the “home” territory that needed protection from external economic domination. The Hungarian liberals, especially the more vocal gentry liberals, wanted to protect the Eastern half of the Empire (Hungary and Transylvania) from

the Western part (Cisleithania), and would have accepted the need to protect the whole of the Empire from the economic imperialism of the more developed Western European countries (especially England). On the other hand, Romanian liberals sought the protection of Transylvanian trade and emerging industry from Hungary, as they identified Transylvania as the closest meaningful unit in the national economic sense. For this purpose, they were ready to co-operate with the Saxons and the Transylvanian Hungarians as well. It was in this frame of mind that the *Gazeta* enthusiastically reported novel economic ventures in Transylvania, which were seen as founding the economic power of the *patria*,¹⁶ and thus its political significance as well. Control over the trade on land towards Wallachia and, complementarily, the entire Ottoman Empire, was also presented as an argument for the necessary empowerment of Transylvania against Hungary (and Cisleithania), benefited by navigation on the Danube.¹⁷

Thus, a Transylvanian version of economic nationalism laid the foundation for the self-congratulating articles on the economic capacities of Transylvania, as well as for those numerous appeals to the “patriots” of Transylvania for greater industry and economic activity inside the *patria*. The modernization of the Transylvanian economy, Romanian liberals argued, was solely in the interest of the “people” of Transylvania, while other proposals (the Hungarian one for sure) were driven by external interests. For this *raison d'état* type of economic consideration, Bariț employed the notion of the “Transylvanian people”—a version of a non-ethnic political “nation” molded together by common (economic) interest. This conception of the Transylvanian people was devised against the background of the similar non-ethnic conception of a Hungarian political nation for the would-be Hungarian nation-state (encompassing the Eastern half of the Habsburg Empire), a central theme of the Hungarian liberals’ nation-building project.

16 Bariț provided the reasons in a comment to the news of the establishment of a sugar factory in Sibiu: “Not only the stockholders, but the city and the *patria* [Transylvania] will draw blessed benefits from this enterprise. Several thousand florins will stay in the country.” “Transilvania”, [Transylvania] *Gazeta* 1840, 3, p. 9.

17 See the account on the establishment of a Transylvanian society for navigation on the Olt, and Bariț’s acknowledgement that “navigation on the Danube caused the decrease of commerce through our *patria*, Transylvania”, “Transilvania”, *Gazeta* 1838, I, 7, p. 25. Later accounts: “Corăbiere pe Olt” *Gazeta* 1839, 7, p. 26; “Transilvania”, *Gazeta* 1839, 12, p. 45; “Transilvania”, *Gazeta* 1839, 17, p. 65; “Transilvania”, *Gazeta* 1840, 5, p. 17; “Transilvania”, *Gazeta* 1841, 45, p. 178.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the *Gazeta* was always keen on emphasizing the mediating role of the monarch in economic matters: he was described as supporting the modernization of the economy of the whole Empire, thus implicitly of Transylvania. The Romanian journal always spoke as if the government of His Majesty was interested in the happiness of all his subjects, being equally in favor of economic advancement anywhere in the country. This was in sharp contrast to the Hungarian liberals' view, which reproached the central government for its one-sided consideration of the economic interests of Cisleithania against the rest of the Empire, but in agreement with the view which the conservatives (and the Széchenyi of the 1840s) propounded in Hungary.¹⁸ This difference in perspective was partly due to the divergent Hungarian and Romanian appreciation of the merits of constitutionalism and absolutism discussed below, and can in part be attributed to the use of such loyal description as a purely rhetorical device. It is, more importantly, in line with the self-conception that the *Gazeta* advanced of the Romanian people being totally devoted to the imperial interests of Austria by means of unconditional commitment towards the closer Transylvanian *patria*, to all its nations constituting it politically a single entity.

POLITICAL-INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE NATION

All Hungarian political theorists, liberals and conservatives alike, seemed to speak a constitutionalist idiom in the early 19th century. Historically, ancient constitutionalism proved to be the best way of fighting attempts coming from a royal center of power aiming at extending its own prerogatives. Thus, initially it functioned as an essentially "conservative" (that is, conserving) ideology of the nobility against absolutist drives, especially when royal power passed to Habsburg hands. The difference between the liberal and the conservative understanding of the constitution at the beginning of the 19th century was tainted by their respective interpretations of the contemporary state of affairs: the liberals saw the constitution as a valuable historic heritage, but not appropriate for their present, thus wanted to keep it but also reform it; the conservatives either wanted to dispense with the constitution

18 For a contrastive view of the Hungarian liberals' and conservatives' main tenets, see Dénes (2001), pp. 35–106; (2006), pp. 155–196; as well as Varga (1982). My account of Hungarian liberalism and conservatism is greatly indebted to these works.

altogether or keep it as it was.¹⁹ Liberals challenged two of the key elements of the constitution: the rights and roles of the institution of the county, the prominent locus of local (and in the imperial framework implicitly national) self-government according to the liberal view; and the definition of the sovereign nation, i.e., the people who were to participate in politics, either at the county or at the national level. These two issues were strongly related: the role of the county depended on a specific understanding of politics and its mechanisms, and also on the definition of those included in politics—that is, the “people,” both in their capacity as voters and also as potentially elected politicians.

Though there is some ambiguity in the Hungarian liberals’ reflections on the institution of the county,²⁰ most of them argued for keeping (or even enhancing) the rights of the county as an institution of local (self)-government, which, if reformed correctly, would be capable of providing a substantial instance of popular sovereignty at work and thus check the central government. Accordingly, the county became of primary importance in the reforming of the ancient constitution into a modern one based on the sovereignty of the people. It was at the level of the county that the liberals saw the possibility of immediately democratizing representation: non-noble people were to participate in the running of the affairs of the county.²¹ It is exactly this possibility that alarmed the conservatives, who saw the counties as already excessively democratic.

Moreover, Hungarian liberal discourse constructed the county not only as a miniature republic,²² a model of popular sovereignty in function, but also as a corrective institution of political socialization: it was to educate the people into thoughtful, cultured and politically mature citizens, who would not only be conscious of the implications of their political choices and actions—that is, becoming rational political actors—but would also “learn” through this process to “love” the constitution and the Hungarian *patria*. The Enlightenment

19 See Schlett (1999); Péter (1998).

20 Among the liberals, the so-called Centralist group was arguing for a greater degree of centralization, i.e., less rights for the county. See Szabó (2006), pp. 211–213.

21 Though it is not always clear whether this would be a first step towards democratizing representation in general, or just the ultimate degree of democratization still acceptable to some of the noble gentlemen.

22 See Szabó’s appreciation: “Gentry liberalism regarded the Hungarian county as a miniature model of state sovereignty, the existence of which would automatically restrict the sovereignty of the government, which had inherited absolutist features.” Szabó (2006), p. 205.

stress on rationality and the need for educating the ignorant was coupled with the employment of a quasi-republican language of patriotism in the Hungarian case showing that, for the liberals, the county was an institution of utmost importance in the construction of a modern Hungarian political nation, both rationally and emotionally. In this sense, the county could provide the necessary socialization for the non-Hungarian would-be citizens into the Hungarian constitution and its corollary, Hungarian patriotism as well.²³

It was a common assumption among 19th-century liberals that the masses were not ready to actively participate in politics, as uneducated and poor people were easy to manipulate; thus popular government would necessarily lead to chaos and ultimately despotism. Most Hungarian and Romanian liberals accordingly stressed that people needed political education, both formal (through the school system) and informal. They devised some intermediary institutions to perform this latter task instead of the political institutions at the state level: for the Hungarian liberals, the counties were to do this; for the Romanians, national corporations. Both these institutions were to constitute affective communities for the individual as well, and this way provide the emotional foundation of patriotism.

In contrast to the Hungarians, the Romanian liberals did not pay too much attention to the role and the possible reforming of the county, although this could have been exploited for their purposes as well. The explanation for this neglect probably lies in the envisioned institutionalization of politics based on national corporations discussed below, which made counties superfluous or meaningless. For them, the mass educational role assigned to the county by the Hungarian liberals was unacceptable as it involved a Hungarian-dominated institution with the objective of establishing a Hungarian nation-state. The Romanians constructed the corporate Romanian nation in Transylvania as their equivalent of an educative and corrective institution that would play the role of an intermediary between individual citizens and country- or empire-wide high politics.

The neglect of the county did not imply a neglect of the issue of constitutionalism: when speaking of constitutions in general,²⁴ the Romanians advocated the need for them as guarantees of lawful government, bringing up the

23 Some liberals argued exactly on this basis that, as some of the counties had a non-Hungarian majority, a greater degree of centralization was needed in order to keep/reconstruct the Hungarian character of the state. See Schlett (1999), p. 105.

24 For instance, "Geografie politică", [Political geography] *Gazeta* 1838, I, 8, p. 28.

archetypal example of Great Britain.²⁵ On the other hand, with respect to a Transylvanian or Hungarian constitution the evaluation was far from unambiguously positive. In 1838 the *Gazeta* quoted the closing oration of the then president of the Transylvanian Diet, Ferenc Kemény, who talked about the 900-years-old constitution of the Hungarians as the most precious legacy of the forefathers, in line with the political language of ancient constitutionalism.²⁶ But the way the oration was quoted makes it clear that the president was talking about a foreign people. In his 1890 *History of Transylvania* written at the end of his career, albeit in a completely changed political atmosphere, Bariț went even further and explicitly spoke about the 1790 constitution of Transylvania²⁷ as being “old, rotten,” a constitution that was not appropriate to the needs of the times, and which Joseph II rightfully discarded.²⁸ However, there were also instances when Bariț felt he had to defend the constitutional character of the government and spoke of the Transylvanian aristocratic-monarchic constitution as the common heritage of the *patria*, one that “we” have,²⁹ “we, Transylvanians, on the support of the law stipulations in our constitution.”³⁰ This positive appreciation of the Transylvanian constitution was in line with the Transylvanian Romanian liberals’ attempt at constructing the Transylvanian “people” as a non-ethnic political nation, subject to the Transylvanian mixed constitution, into which the Romanian nation wanted to be incorporated. The wavering between the positive and the negative assessment of Transylvanian constitutionalism reflects the indecision of the Romanian liberals on whether the old constitution could be the foundation for a new institutional setup in which Romanians could play the leading role or not.

25 The reason for the admiration of the British constitution was that it functioned as a veritable mixed government, Bariț’s ideal. Bariț says that an Englishman can love both his king/queen and the constitution as a saint and not be in contradiction. “Britania mare” [Great Britain] *Gazeta* 1838, I, 7, p. 26. The respect for municipal, that is, local or minority rights was also acknowledged as a positive feature of the British constitution (especially in relation to the Irish). “Britania Mare” [Great Britain] *Gazeta* 1838, I, 15, p. 58.

26 “Transilvania” [Transylvania] *Gazeta* 1838, I, 5, p. 18. Again, the same Kemény talks the same way at the opening of the 1841 Diet. See “Transilvania. Deschiderea Dietei” [Transylvania. Opening of the Diet] *Gazeta* 1841, 46, p. 181.

27 Which was still seen as the first reformed, that is, modern, constitution in the articles of the *Gazeta*.

28 See Bariț (1889–1891), vol. 1, pp. 520, 524.

29 “Ungaria” [Hungary], *Gazeta* 1840, 44, p. 173.

30 “Transilvania”, [Transylvania], *Gazeta* 1841, 41, p.161.

Connected to the assigned role of constitutionalism was the appreciation of the monarchic principle, enlightened absolutism in particular. For the Hungarian liberals, enlightened absolutism was still absolutism, despotic and thus unacceptable.³¹ Their argument for this was almost republican in tone: the issue was not the benevolence or the personal talents of the individual ruler, but the legal framework that guaranteed individual rights for (all) the people and the ensuing (sovereign) governing power of the representative Diet. In the case of Romanian public discourse, monarchs in general, and enlightened rulers in particular, enjoyed a different attitude. In the texts of the *Gazeta*, Frederick the Great of Prussia,³² Joseph II, and Austrian emperors in general, were portrayed as positive heroes. This dissimilarity was noted by the contemporaries as well: it is reported that when Bariț met in 1844 the Wallachian liberal leader Ion Cămpineanu, the latter formulated the reproach that the Romanians in Transylvania wanted to be liberated by absolutism.³³ The possible reason for this notable preference for the enlightened ruler against a representative Diet or responsible government might be explained by simple pragmatic reasoning: one man was easier to convince of the rightfulness of Romanian requests than a whole Diet or any kind of representative government. And, if he was convinced, all was accomplished: as he was also the executive, he could have acted upon those requests immediately.³⁴ Pragmatism might also be implied in the very description of Austria: such a solution was based on the reality of absolute monarchic government, a fact that Hungarian liberals denied, arguing that there might be absolutism in Cisleithania, but Hungary was a constitutional state with a mixed government including a representative Diet. The theoretical possibility of a (more) democratic Transylvanian constitution, which could have meant the numerical domination of the Romanians, was never discussed; presumably also because Bariț himself was no

31 This is probably due to the origins of the Hungarian liberal movement in the noble (feudal) opposition to Joseph II. See Szabó's discussion on the origins of Hungarian liberalism as being so much different than those of continental liberalism, Szabó (2006), pp. 198–200.

32 See, for instance: "Porusia", [Prussia] *Gazeta* 1838, I, 2, p. 8; "Frideric cel Mare" [Frederick the Great] *Foaie* 1838, 6, pp. 45–48; 7, p. 53.

33 See Cheresteșiu (1917), p. 21.

34 The large number of references to the 1791 *Supplex Libellus Walachorum* seems to indicate this direction of argument. But, then, in the 1890 *History of Transylvania* Bariț detachedly makes the self-defeating claim that the *Supplex* was authorized in advance by the Austrian ministers, thus, implying that the whole Romanian petition-movement was initiated by the imperial government as a diversion targeted towards the Hungarians. See Bariț (1889–1891), vol. 1, p. 543.

democrat. In line with the majority opinion of Hungarian liberals, Romanian liberals too wanted to condition political participation on the meeting of certain criteria, especially wealth and education.³⁵

Sticking to the monarch also had a justification separate from the Enlightenment ideas of a benevolent master: in Romanian discourse he was portrayed as the personification of the Austrian state (of the larger *patria*), and the logic of patriotism implied that they should be loyal to him, no matter what, because this meant that they were loyal to the state. The pre-nationalist personal understanding of patriotism could easily be related to the Enlightenment idea of man needing a master, and to the pragmatic reasoning behind preferring the monarch to the Diet. This Romanian imperial patriotism was accentuated in the early 1840s by the heightening tension between the Hungarians and the other nationalities (in Transylvania this primarily meant the state-constituting nation of the Saxons), when strategically the Romanians chose to be neutral, as far as possible, in order to lose the least and possibly also gain something. This stance also implied that they authorized the monarch to decide in the disputes between the Hungarians and the Saxons. Thus, it can be argued that this conscious employment of a pre-modern patriotic discourse by the Romanian theorists, at the time when other national liberalisms demanded absolute loyalty to the ethnic nation instead of the state or the ruler, was itself a pragmatic choice. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the preference for pre-modern mixed constitutions over states constituted on the principle of popular sovereignty displayed by Bariț also betrays his essentially critical attitude towards the foundational idea of popular government, and implicitly nationalism—the idea that would sanction a simple representative parliament as the governing body of a state.

POPULAR REPRESENTATION AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

According to Bariț's typology of states, Transylvania was a state with a mixed constitution in which the Diet constituted the republican element. It was this republican element that required thorough reform, according to the Romanians. A first indication of the envisioned reforms was the insistence that the Romanians be incorporated into the fourth nation (besides the already exist-

³⁵ See the description of popular ignorance as part of the Romanian negative self-image in Mitu (1997), pp. 103–131, the liberals taking a prominent place in it, arguing that increased democracy was therefore not suitable to the Romanians.

ing three corporate nations of the Hungarians, the Szeklers and the Saxons) and thus be represented in the Diet. This traditional Romanian request was coupled with the claim that Romanians could not be satisfied by the granting of individual liberty (i.e., to elect and be elected into an increasingly representative Diet); they also needed national liberty, a concept similar to the republican idea of liberty.³⁶

The Romanians invoked the argument of national liberty in their fight against Magyarization; they claimed that the political being of the Romanian nation was put in danger. Magyarization, however, was not precisely defined: it could mean anything from forced assimilation to the milder demands ensuing from the liberal construction of the Hungarian political nation (like, for instance, introducing Hungarian as an official language, or, demanding that public officers speak Hungarian). Bariț made it clear that neither Magyarization, nor the inclusion of Romanians into the constitution on an individual basis had negative effects on the individual well-being of the Romanians, but instead it endangered their political existence as a nation.³⁷ This argument makes it clear that for Bariț, being a “nation” included a definite political aspect: that the given group was entitled to an autonomous (at least semi-independent) political existence.³⁸ That is why he always emphasized the need for the acknowledgement of Romanian state-building capacities by legally establishing and guaranteeing the corporative rights of the Romanian nation in the Transylvanian constitution.

It is this implication that nationality, unlike religion for example, required the existence of a community (the nation) that had sovereign-like rights over its members, which was in sharp contrast to the Hungarian liberal offer of a unitary Hungarian political nation coupled with the recognition of “nationalities”—that is, cultural or language communities having no political rights and exercising no authority over their members. This Hungarian liberal offer was instead perceived by the “nationalities,” among them the Romanians, as itself a sheer case of “Magyarization,” because it reduced nationality to the private realm of the individual. The Hungarian liberal ideal of a unitary political nation to which every citizen could be connected by constitutional

36 What Benjamin Constant called the “liberty of the ancients,” or Isaiah Berlin “positive liberty,” implying direct government.

37 See his “Românii și maghiarismul” [The Romanians and Magyarism] *Foaie* 1842, 9, pp. 65–69; 10, pp. 73–77; 11, pp. 81–86.

38 See also his “Românii și panslavismul” [The Romanians and Pan-Slavism] *Foaie* 1841, 45, pp. 353–358.

patriotism was thus contested by the Romanian liberals on the grounds of a disparate understanding of what nationality implied, defining ethnic communities as the appropriate repositories of political authority, which was to be effectively distributed among them in a multinational state like Transylvania. This understanding had special implications for the political institutions in Transylvania, due to an existing setup that could be made congruent with it.

This existing political-institutional setup, the formula of political representation of the three corporate “nations” (the Hungarians, the Szeklers and the Saxons) in a unicameral Diet provided a special focus not only for the Romanian liberal discourse but for the Hungarian one as well, though for different reasons. The Hungarian liberals liked the idea of a unicameral representative institution (against the dual chambers of the Hungarian Diet), but wanted to dispense with the corporate bodies in it altogether to guarantee internal democracy, and also extend the medieval concept of the “nation” to include more people besides the nobility,³⁹ especially members of the urban middle classes and the professions. The Hungarian liberals’ project was in sharp contrast, however, with the Romanian insistence on preserving national corporations, only extending the institutional setup to include the Romanians as the fourth corporate “nation.” Thus, it is no wonder that to Hungarian liberals, even the liberal Romanian discourse seemed to advocate the institution that was recognized by them as being paradigmatically conservative. This sticking to the idea of being “incorporated” into the Transylvanian constitution as the fourth state-building nation seems to be, nevertheless, an enduring characteristic of modern Romanian political discourse.⁴⁰

The corporate nation, in line with its pre-modern definition, was to be made up of smaller corporations, professional, local, confessional, vocational, etc. Arguably the more traditional Romanian society also predisposed the Romanian liberals to envisage themselves in a corporative setup. It is symptomatic of this attitude that Bariț gave the definition of “individual” in a footnote to one of his first articles on England in 1838: “an individual is a person taken on its own,”⁴¹ after using the Romanian for corporation (“*obște*”)

39 For an analysis of the central tenet of Hungarian liberalism, the “extension of rights,” see Dénes (2006), pp. 172–182.

40 Going back to the famous grievances of the Romanian “nation” (the so-called *Supplex Libellus Walachorum*) submitted by the two Romanian bishops to Emperor Leopold II in 1791—the first instance of Transylvanian Romanians voicing political demands.

41 “Britannia Mare” [Great Britain] *Gazeta* 1838, I, 2, p. 7.

without any explanation—thus, one can relatively safely make the claim that for Bariț, the idea of the individual seemed more abstract than that of a regulated human community, a corporation. In a sense, the Romanian discourse on corporations is quasi-republican: it is as if the corporate nations would function as non-territorial republics, being the forums for members with (almost) equal political rights, governing themselves with no external interference. On the other hand, keeping the Diet as a forum for exchange among the representatives of the four corporate nations stressed the “aristocratic” character of high politics, the only change being that the new representatives were to be “aristocrats of merit” sanctioned by the Romanian, Hungarian, Saxon and Szekler nations respectively.

Therefore, the Romanian definition of political nationhood brings in democracy only within the strictly delimited corporate nations and without establishing the actual modes of its functioning. In this sense the Romanian modeling of the corporate nation was similar to the Hungarians’ construction of the county as the institution of local democracy. Both these institutions were meant to control democracy, to keep popular government within limits, but while the county was a local institution that could be multiethnic at least in theory, membership in the corporate nations was by definition conditioned by ethnic belonging. Another major point of divergence was that while the institutionalization of politics in the counties was based on the recognition and representation of local interests, the national corporatist setup defined interests along exclusively ethnic lines, leaving the rest of the possible matters at the discretion of its chosen representatives in high politics. This view, however, was never spelled out in its fullness, there were only hints that something similar was envisioned.

The Romanian vision of politics was unthinkable to the Hungarian liberals, as it presented no solutions to their dilemmas, it particularly hindered the social emancipation of serfs and, thus, the construction of a modern body politic made of well-to-do and educated citizens, as well as its basis: a modern functional economy. The Romanian claim was in fact closer to what the Hungarian conservatives wanted, or at least would have tolerated, because it could be met in a way that precluded social reforms, any real expanding of the limits of the body politic (which would still only include aristocrats of some sort), that is, of the political nation (in liberal parlance), which was the repository of sovereign political power.

The Romanian vision of the “patriarchal” institutionalization of politics thus ran contrary to the principle of popular sovereignty. A lack of faith in the capacities of the Romanian people as well as the assessment of their own

backwardness as compared to the other nations⁴² surely contributed to its foundation. It is important to note, however, that while this stance might bring them conceptually closer to the conservatives in the Hungarian setup than to the liberals, the Romanian liberals still proved to be liberals: they did not discard the principle and the ideal of political modernization, but instead set out to find solutions that would help the Romanian masses along their road of social, educational and ultimately national emancipation. The immediate solution would have been the corporatist-representative mediated democracy (in case they were given political rights before the needed emancipation could have happened), but in the long run a more substantial and individualist version could have been acceptable (though this is more of an inference than a situation actually spelled out). Until happier times would come, however, Bariț urged his compatriots to advance on the road of political education and set the task of educating the masses as the paramount objective for the Romanian intelligentsia.

CULTURAL NATION VS. POLITICAL NATION

The union of Transylvania and Hungary into a single state within the Austrian Empire was one of the main tenets of Hungarian liberal programs starting from the 1830s. The arguments for the union commonly presented were about the creation of a Hungarian political nation for a Hungarian nation-state. In this project Transylvania was defined as essentially and historically part of Hungary (a land of Saint Stephen's crown), in addition it was Hungarian-dominated, so it had to be included in their potential Hungarian nation-state. Thus, while their offer of an all-inclusive Hungarian political nation was extended to the different ethnic groups of Transylvania, their project of cultural nation-building included the Hungarians in Transylvania. It was the concatenation of these two projects that troubled the Romanians and the Saxons in Transylvania: they recognized that the prospective Hungarian cultural nation was territorially congruous with the Hungarian political nation.

A wider context for understanding the dispute among Hungarians on the one hand, and Romanians and Saxons on the other,⁴³ would be the respec-

42 For a detailed discussion on these components of the negative self-image of the Romanians in Transylvania, see Mitu (1997), pp. 103–127.

43 This is the setup for Transylvania, in Hungary a similar dispute went on especially between Hungarians and Slavic nations.

tive discourses on the international standing and relations of the Austrian Empire, greatly influenced by reason of state arguments. Both the Hungarians and the Romanians agreed that there was a need for a strong Austria in the center of Europe, counter-balancing the power of Russia (and thus keeping oriental despotism at bay), but they had widely disparate views on how to achieve this strength. The Hungarians argued that only a strong Hungary comprising Transylvania in a constitutional Austria could do this, while the Romanians and the Saxons were of the view that Transylvania had to stay separate from Hungary, and guarantee ethnic peace by granting equal standing to its nationalities, this being the only way to ensure Empire-wide peace and tranquility.

Another dilemma of international relations, more significant for Transylvania in general and especially for the Romanians, was the evaluation of the fate of the Ottoman Empire (including the Danubian principalities). When speaking about the Danubian principalities, Bariț made it clear that his preference (actually, his vision for the future) was for the final independence and union of these two,⁴⁴ that is, the creation of a constitutional Romanian nation-state. In arguing for it he used the notions of “national state” and “national constitution.” Moreover, an argument that appeared in the discussion over the impossibility and inexpediency of Magyarizing declared that the two Danubian principalities acted as strong magnets for the Romanians in Transylvania, and thus guaranteed their national existence and development (in cultural terms).⁴⁵ These two arguments, i.e., the preference for an independent Romanian nation-state, and the connection made between the cultural accomplishments of the Romanians in Transylvania and those in the principalities, however, were never paired in an argument for a great Romanian state encompassing all Romanians, as this would have run contrary to the Transylvanian Romanian liberals’ initial stance of guarding the strength and great power standing of the multinational Austrian Empire.⁴⁶ The unquestioned imperial patriot-

44 For a powerful presentation of this argument, see the article translated from the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*: “Împărtașiri din Moldova” [Relations from Moldavia] *Gazeta* 1841, 34, p. 136; 35, p. 139.

45 See his “Românii și maghiarismul” [The Romanians and Magyarism] *Foaie* 1842, 9, pp. 65–69; 10, pp. 73–77; 11, pp. 81–86.

46 The same point is made by Mitu (2006), p. 94. He emphasizes that prior to 1848 the Transylvanian Romanians adhered to the pre-nationalist version of patriotism: the multiethnic, multicultural Transylvanian *patria* was designated as the single legitimate object of their political loyalty, while their nationalism was purely cultural. This situation changed dramatically after 1848–49 according to Mitu.

ism of the Romanian theorists precluded even the theoretical possibility of envisioning an all-inclusive Romanian nation-state outside the borders of Austria.

In the context of Transylvanian public discourse, the Hungarian liberal ideal of union with Hungary was most vehemently contested by the Saxons and the Romanians. They did not acknowledge any historic right or precedent to this unification as invoked by the Hungarians, and they did not see the usefulness of such a move. An indication of a possible Romanian position (also significant in view of the connection to the Romanians over the Carpathians) before the debate on the language and the union gathered momentum can be deduced from a typology of states that Bariț presented in an essay on political geography. In this he plainly described Germany as a country (“*țară*”) divided into 38 independent states (“*Staturi*”), having themselves disparate forms of government, kept together only by the bond of confederation, and Italy as “a country divided into several states.”⁴⁷ There is no indication whatsoever that the connection the German *Bund* provided would not be sufficient, or that the several German states should unite into one state. Moreover, in his description of Austria there is no indication whatsoever, that such a conglomerate (which had parts from the German confederation and also a “state” that was part of Italy, the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom) would be an unnatural or unstable state-formation, an argument that was, by contrast, often invoked in this period against the Ottoman Empire.

It can be inferred from this description that Bariț would not have had any problems with the fact that the Romanian nation was divided into two or three different states (in his typology, the exact analogy to this would be Italy). Though it is also true that this could have meant that these states were at some point in the past, or would be at a point in the future (or both), capable of making themselves up into a “country,” a troubling inference for the Hungarians.⁴⁸ Sometimes the Romanians described Transylvania as having the

47 “Geografie politică (Urmare)” [Political geography. Continuation] *Gazeta*, 1838, I, 8, pp. 31–32. In 1841 Bariț reiterated his argument for Germany, but more openly: against unnamed French theorists questioning the statehood of Germany, he declared that Germany was as much a state as Switzerland or the US, because statehood could be equated to political existence, which in turn could be equated to nationhood. See “Britania mare” [Great Britain] *Gazeta* 1841, 33, p. 132.

48 This is actually the direction into which this sort of argument was developed in the late 19th-, turn of the 20th-century Romanian political discourse, but it is in no way present with writers like Bariț, except as a logical possibility.

same status within the Monarchy as Galicia or Bukovina, but at other times they accentuated the historical development of Transylvania as a separate constitutional state—separate from Hungary, but part of Austria, directly subordinated to the Austrian central government. Both possibilities were formulated against the Hungarian claim that Transylvania was neither an Austrian province, nor a self-sufficient state in itself, but could only be a state together with Hungary, and thus be a part of the Austrian Empire.

It is indicative of Bariț's wavering on this issue that immediately following the outbreak of the 1848 revolution in Hungary, Bariț was satisfied with the 12th point of the Hungarian revolutionary program declaring the union of Transylvania and Hungary, but shortly afterwards he subscribed to the opposing claim of Simion Bărnuțiu that no union was acceptable and Transylvania should remain a separate province within the Monarchy. To explain this hesitation, one should probably look into the understanding of "union" that was shifting as well: a union *qua* federation such as that in Switzerland was acceptable (though it was not spelled out if this only applied in relation to Hungary or to the whole Austria), while a union as "fusion" of Transylvania and Hungary into a single "state" was unacceptable to the Romanians.

The issue of union was directly related to the problem of reforming the constitution, as any change in the provincial setup would also pose questions relating to the form of government. Bariț's preference would have probably been for a federative setup of the whole Monarchy, as his positive description of Germany and Switzerland suggests. This possibility, however, was never discussed openly, probably because of the unfavorable political atmosphere. Another indication of what the proper form of state would be for the Romanians was given by the eulogistic way Bariț talked about Daniel O'Connell ("this hero of humanity and liberty, guarding angel of his *patria*, Ireland"⁴⁹) and the Irish in general, especially in their relation to Great Britain. The Irish theme was given a prominent place among the foreign topics of the *Gazeta* throughout the decade prior to 1848; the developments in Irish politics were discussed more often than those of any other European people fighting for national rights, that is, the Italians or the Poles.⁵⁰ The Irish could be used as the best analogy for the situation of the Romanians in Transylvania most importantly for tactical reasons: because their situation had no connection to Austria, while in the case of the Italians or the Poles Austria was obviously play-

49 "Britania mare" [Great Britain] *Gazeta* 1838, I, 6, p. 22.

50 See the statistics presented in Sorin Mitu's study on the use of the Irish model by the Transylvanian Romanians in Mitu (2006), pp. 387–413.

ing the role of the oppressor, thus speaking on a positive tone about the former would essentially mean being disloyal to the Empire. Nevertheless, the Irish analogy had another motivation as well: Bariț was always keen on emphasizing the legal, anti-revolutionary character of the Irish movement headed by O'Connell, this being the liberal ideal for the Romanian national emancipation movement as well. The projected status of Ireland within Great Britain, extensive political autonomy (the possibility of Repeal of Union seemed unattainable and impractical to Bariț), including the establishment of an Irish parliament in Ireland, offered a solution that would also be acceptable to the Romanians in their relation to Austria. It would have satisfied the triple demands of reason of state, popular sovereignty and nationalism at the same time, ensuring corporative liberty for the Romanian nation, corporative representation for the masses by people of genuine merit, and still keep the great power standing of Austria.

CONCLUSION

The choice of the Irish model by the Romanian liberals as a possible self-projection indicates their adoption of a separatist nationalism, the kind that is most commonly associated with subject peoples fighting a powerful oppressor.⁵¹ Separatism in the Romanian case was not that much an issue of territorial separation (though the insistence on the statehood of Transylvania could be interpreted as a version of this); instead it was reflected in the claim that people should be organized into separate and delimited corporate nations. The opposite to the Irish model would have been the Scottish,⁵² a version of unionist nationalism, which seems to have never echoed with the 19th-century Romanian and Hungarian liberals. Both of these national traditions of liberalism seem closer to the Irish model, but even if both discourses were constructed from the standpoint of subjected people, the oppressor was different. For the Hungarians, the oppressor was the absolutist Austrian Empire, while for the Romanians it was the nationalizing Hungarians, while the Empire played the role of a possible ally. The disparate

51 See a possible assessment: "The ideology of the liberal nationalist program, and the lack of the national conservative role implied similar positions, outlooks and values among the German, Italian, Greek, Norwegian, Finnish, Irish, Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Croatian, Serbian, Romanian and Bulgarian liberals and conservatives." in Dénes (2006), p. 7.

52 For an analysis of the Scottish version, see Finlay (2006), pp. 37–54.

projections of these friends and foes caused Romanian national liberalism to appear at times closer to Hungarian conservatism, another ally of the absolutist Empire, than to Hungarian liberalism.

It is important to note, however, that Bariț did not turn towards the conservatives; instead he preferred to blend the economic and some of the political aspirations of the liberals with Transylvanian and imperial patriotism (both being supra-national), and Romanian cultural nationalism. This is the reason why even absolutism could be acceptable to Bariț, if the absolutist ruler had been a truly enlightened one, who would modernize politics and society, emancipating a people which was only tolerated⁵³ into one that was the equal of other peoples. Nonetheless, he repeatedly declared that constitutional governments were better than absolutist ones, thus subscribing in theory to the Hungarian liberals' vision of a modern Austrian Empire governed constitutionally. It was also clear to Bariț that the Hungarian nation-building project essentially aimed at the creation of a modern political nation capable of bringing about the reality of popular sovereignty, still he considered it excessively assimilationist, and therefore proposed instead an institutional framework that would safeguard the cultural and linguistic identity of all the nationalities, while still leaving some scope to popular politics.

What lay at the core of the difference between Romanian and Hungarian national-political projects was the issue of popular representation, and, more specifically, the scope of corporative representation. While Hungarians did not see any use for a corporatist framework, Bariț and the Romanians in general endorsed it as an alternative to both strict individual representation and to absolutism. Bariț repeatedly declared that the Romanian people were not ready to act as responsible political actors, due to their lack of means, especially education. Corporative representation could therefore be a corrective solution, and it could also be an educative institution. The Hungarian liberals, as themselves convinced of the dangers of democracy with uneducated masses, also saw the need for educating and keeping them at bay; the political institution meant to do this being the county. What the Hungarian liberals wanted to solve on the level of the county (more democratic politics, education of the would-be political actors), the Romanians sought in the framework of a strictly national corporation. While employing the pre-modern concept of the nation, they intentionally tinged it with implications coming from the

53 Bariț spoke at a certain point about the "handcuffs of toleration" in reference to Jews, but this assessment could also be applied to others: "Ungaria", [Hungary] *Gazeta* 1840, 15, p. 58.

modern understanding of the nation as a community of language. In this sense, their nationalism was both more “ancient” and more exclusivist. That is why it met with so little understanding from the Hungarian liberals, who argued that their own conception of a non-ethnic Hungarian political nation was more democratic, less authoritarian and better suited to bring about the modernization of society at large and economy in particular. However, it is important to recognize that both national liberal projects envisaged mediating institutions between the individual and the state, the county and the national corporation respectively. These aimed at essentially the same purpose: bringing more people into the nation and into modern politics, but in a way that would not undermine the values and the effectiveness of popular government. What both feared was the uncontrollable turmoil of the masses.

It is not surprising that both Hungarian and Romanian liberalism changed dramatically with the onset of the 1848 revolution and afterwards. Coping with a popular revolution brought about dilemmas unknown before, while the neo-absolutism following 1849 drastically limited the public sphere where any kind of liberalism could exert its influence. Nevertheless, what proved most significant in the mutual relationship of the two national traditions was the antagonism and lack of understanding manifested in the revolutionary years, when the Hungarians and Romanians found themselves fighting on the opposite sides of the barricade, the Romanians allying with the Empire against the Hungarians who fought for independence from the Empire. Perceptible discursive legitimization for either position was present in the period preceding the revolution, and the gap only widened afterwards with both national idioms adopting a more exclusivist stance. After the revolution it became increasingly difficult to construct a supra-national or multi-national *patria* commanding the loyalty of various nations. Thus, neither Transylvanian nor imperial patriotism proved attractive to the increasingly nation-centered political projects; instead co-nationals were constructed as the only legitimate partners in remodeling politics: Hungarians were reluctant to accept anything but a Hungarian nation-state, while Romanians started to look for political alliance with the Romanian nation-state being created across the Carpathians.

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WE, THE MACEDONIANS

The Paths of Macedonian Supra-Nationalism (1878-1912)

TCHAVDAR MARINOV

NATIONHOOD IN OTTOMAN MACEDONIA REFRAMED

The present paper sheds light on the most important patterns of Macedonian political emancipation, from the period subsequent to the Congress of Berlin (1878) and prior to the Balkan wars (1912-1913). It focuses on a number of problems addressed by this volume: different modalities of nationalism (supra-national, inter-national, etc.); paradigm shifts of national discourses; the relationship between confessional and national identities, and between ethnicity and different political ideologies (liberal, socialist). The timeframe is by no means arbitrarily chosen: while the so-called “Macedonian Question” was generally perceived, already in this period, as a result of a political setting provoked by the decisions taken in Berlin, the context that followed the first division of the region brought about different political commitments deserving further special attention and survey.

It should be also noticed that, although “Macedonia” did not constitute a geographical or administrative entity in the framework of the Ottoman Empire, quite soon after 1878, diverse mappings projected this designation over parts of three administrative units—*vilayets*—inhabited by various populations. The Muslims (classified as “Turks,” “Albanians,” “Muslim Slavs,” “Gypsies,” etc.) cohabited with Jews (mostly in Salonica) and with Christians, amongst whom there were “Greeks,” “Vlachs,” “Slavs” and others. The “identity” of the Slavic population,¹ often seen as the largest linguistic “group,” was nevertheless far from being a single one: it included “Greeks” or “Slav-/Bulgarian-speaking Greeks”; “Bulgarians”; and “Serbs” (the “Macedonian Slavs” having also their place on certain mappings by the end of the 19th century).

¹ The terms “Slavic population” and “Slavs” are used here as a reference to people speaking a certain vernacular tongue without predilection for their ethnic or national allegiances. However, one should take into account the fact that this was not an indigenous self-designation even if it was used by certain local intellectuals, mostly in the 19th century.

These were the categorizations applied by Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian patriotic scholars during the period in question. But, today, the Bulgarian and the Macedonian historiographies are still struggling for the “right” definition of identity for the local Slavs: “Macedonian Bulgarians,” according to the scholars from Sofia, or “ethnic Macedonians,” according to those from Skopje. At the same time, most studies on Macedonia made by authors outside the Balkan region tend to present in a somewhat ironical way the mutually exclusive statistics of “nationalities” made by Balkan scholars cum propagandists.

Ottoman Macedonia is often depicted as absolutely lacking any proper idea of ethnicity, or as a terrible mixture sarcastically called *salade macédoine*.² More specifically, it is believed that the Macedonian Slavs had “no clearly developed sense of national identity” and that their modes of self-identification were shaped by neighboring Churches (the Constantinople Patriarchate rivaling with the Bulgarian Exarchate), schools and armed bands (Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek).³ Otherwise, the “ethnic” categories were blurred, or represented just a function of social or professional status: the “Greeks” being the urban people, the “Bulgarians”—peasants, the “Vlachs”—transhumant shepherds, etc.⁴ That is why the properly ethnic divisions that caused all the bloodshed in Macedonia in the beginning of the 20th century were themselves imposed by “outside” actors.⁵ The commitment of members of the local Slavic population to the causes of Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian nationalism is seen as a result of a mere “propaganda.”

Despite being a good counterweight to nationalist historiographic constructions like the Bulgarian one, this approach nevertheless implies a *double essentialism*. Firstly, in a typical reifying manner, it presumes the existence of some “genuine” or “proper sense of national identity” that all the members of a certain well-bound collectivity or “group” are equally, absolutely and constantly aware of. Such an “identity” is supposed to guide their everyday agency in some fundamental way. This was apparently not the case of turn-of-the-

2 Duncan Perry suggests that today this “phrase coined a century ago to characterize the complex demographic makeup of Macedonia [...] is no less apt”—Perry (1988), p. 24.

3 Danforth (1995), p. 59.

4 This vision was already being promoted in the beginning of the 20th century by authors like Brailsford (1906) and Ancel (1930). A more nuanced version of the same vision, focusing on the social aspects of choosing between ethnic and national “identities” in the late 19th- and early 20th-century Macedonia, can be found in Gounaris (1996).

5 Danforth (1995), p. 60. Cf. Karakasidou (1997).

20th-century Macedonia, but is implicitly deemed to hold true for somewhere else. Secondly, this thesis tends to indirectly essentialize what is seen as the “a-national” character of Macedonian Slavs: ironically, the lack of national identity could also be a kind of identity and it is not by chance that the thesis of the “floating mass” of Macedonian Slavs is often used by the Macedonian national historiography in order to assert a distinct “ethnic character.” In this sense, the “a-national” theory is connected to what Ulf Brunnbauer labels as the historiographic “myth of victimization”⁶; poor and naïve Macedonian Slavs were split and opposed to each other by “voracious” neighbors. Moreover, this vision inculcates a certain diagnosis of political infantilism onto the Macedonian population, essentialized as *a priori* belated, immature and far less national than the one of Serbia, Greece or Bulgaria prior to their “liberations” from Ottoman rule.

However, from another perspective, Macedonia’s population from the turn-of-the-20th-century may seem—quite on the contrary—rather *national* or relatively well “nationalized,” involved in diverse political agenda and even developing its one. Of course, the very concept of a “Macedonian population” should be nuanced. If the large peasant majority was in most of the cases undoubtedly far from the univocal categories of “national identity,” the same does not hold true for its intelligentsia or “elite.” It would be both unfair and, from a historical point of view, incorrect to pathologize the local nationalist intelligentsias as a deplorable outcome of foreign “propagandas.” In 19th-century Macedonia, manifestations of Greek and Bulgarian nationalism preceded the moment of active political propaganda and, in the case of Bulgarian self-identification, even the establishment of the national Church (1870) and state (1878). This fact does not imply that these nationalisms represented a “natural” manifestation of millenary historical continuity as the local national historiographies assume. But nor does this mean that, in the Macedonian context, such manifestations were somewhat more “artificial” and “provoked from the outside” than the ones of other Balkan contexts.

Although it is beyond doubt that 19th-century Macedonia did not have powerful Slavic or other nationalist intelligentsias, around the turn-of-the-20th-century, their social stratum was hardly much thinner than ones in other Balkan countries prior to their achievement of national statehood. The first statistics concerning the literacy in Bulgaria after 1878 show catastrophic data (about 3–4% of the population were literate) that are scarcely better than the

6 Brunnbauer (2004), pp. 186–190.

situation in the 1910s in Macedonia where the sharp Pan-Balkan competition in opening schools for the local Christian population only enlarged the spread of education. The network of, for example, Bulgarian schools in pre-1912 Macedonia was quite comparable to the one within would-be Bulgaria before 1878. The number of social and cultural transformations are also to be taken into account. Such a powerful innovation as the electric telegraph was unknown both to the Empire and to Serbs and Greeks in the moment of their struggles for independence in the beginning of the 19th century. Ottoman provinces in Macedonia were crossed by several railroads inexistent in Greece and Serbia before they attained the status of nation-states. And there were also socialists, trade union movement activists, anarchists and quite modern terrorists—political currents and phenomena that make in many respects incommensurable the situation of the turn-of-the-20th-century Ottoman and Macedonian context with the moment of Serbian and Greek “revolutions.” As far as the extent of national agitation is concerned, the anti-Ottoman Ilinden uprising in 1903 demonstrated a larger scope than Bulgaria’s April insurrection in 1876 (which encompassed a broader territory and a longer period of action, more participants, etc.), even though it did not take place only in Macedonia.

That is why the talk of particularly “a-national” Macedonian populations and, in particular, Macedonian Slavs is seriously misleading. Firstly, it does not show a difference between peasants and intelligentsia and accepts the quite problematic thesis that the peasant majority in other parts of the Balkans was somewhat more “awake” and nationally oriented. Secondly, it is used to implicitly promote certain kinds of nationalist vision. Namely, the origin of the “a-national” thesis could be itself traced back to the propagandist strategy deployed by the eminent geographer Jovan Cvijić who conspicuously put the Macedonian Slavic *masse flottante* to the south of cities like Skopje and Prilep which had been claimed by Serbian national romanticism.⁷ Thirdly, this concept is overloaded with the essentialism of the “genuine national identity” as well as with a certain balkanist vision which deems that “Balkan nationalism” is *a priori* belated, “artificial,” etc.

Phenomenon such as the Macedonian peasants’ lack of concern for any national commitment was definitely not invented by the scholars. Instead, it happened to be so famous, and to such a large extent, because of the complicated international setting of the “Macedonian Question” that favored observ-

7 Cf. Cvijić (1907).

ers' interest towards the mentality of those people whose indifference in other geographical contexts passed unnoticed.⁸ The same holds true also for the famous mixed character of Macedonia, which did not differ much from other regions in Eastern and Southeastern Europe like the Banat and Vojvodina, Transylvania, Dobroudja, etc. Moreover, it would be quite unconvincing to assume that ethnic or national motives were never present in the agency of illiterate populations when illiterate or half-literate Macedonian Christians fought between themselves as "Greeks," "Bulgarians," "Serbs" and "Romanians": surely, it was not just a struggle between social or professional categories. Indeed, in many parts of Macedonia, the Christian villages switched a number of times between diverse national allegiances, but this was the result of a cruel clash between several nationalisms (Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian) that were also fervently implanted (if not predominantly) by local people.

Last but not least, local people developed patterns of a distinct Macedonian loyalty, which are discussed below. All this does not necessarily mean any particular pre-eminence of "ethnic" motives in the Macedonian revolutionary movement. The following analysis tries to show that the question of ethnicity was not necessarily of primal concern for the political activism developed within the local revolutionary movement by the turn of the 20th century. But Macedonian revolutionaries were by no means "a-national" either: based on certain nationalisms of the region, mostly on the Bulgarian one, their ideology was in many cases *supra-national*. At least in theory, it intended to bring together—under the common denominator of "Macedonian people"—members of different ethnic, confessional and national groups.

Contrary to the simplifications of modern national narratives, the present survey is inspired by Fredrick Barth's emphasis on the circumstantialist and interactionist character of ethnicity. It could make more understandable some of the paradoxes that seem difficult to resolve in the rigid framework of national historiographies.⁹ Rogers Brubaker's insistence on ethnicity as a category of practice and cognition rather than as a matter of firmly set-up solid "groups"¹⁰ goes one step further and may be as useful for the study of nationhood in Macedonia. The following argument at-

8 Here, the title of Eugen Weber's classical study *Peasants into Frenchmen* is revealing enough. Before their incorporation into the Serbian nation-state, many of the "Serbs" in Kosovo did not have much developed national identity either: Malcolm (1998), p. 231.

9 Barth (1969).

10 "Ethnicity without Groups" and "Beyond Identity" in Brubaker (2004).

tempts—indeed—to demonstrate the contingent and variably salient¹¹ character of those self-identifications, categorizations and political loyalties that the national historians take for granted. But, whatever paradoxical and unexpected vicissitudes may emerge from this multiplicity, both the fearsome essentialism of the always “floating” and “a-national” Macedonian Slavic identity and the implicit orientalism of the explosive *salade macédoine* should be left aside.

THE MACEDONIAN AUTONOMY: TOWARDS A SEPARATE POLITICAL LOYALTY

Throughout the 1880s and the 1890s, within the Macedonian political organizations in Bulgaria and on Macedonian terrain, two general tendencies crystallized, opposed and competed with each other, but also intermingled and experienced mutual transmutation. This was, on the one hand, a scenario hardly successful from an international relations point of view: the unification of the whole region with the “liberated” Bulgarian Principality following the imagery of the “Greater Bulgaria” temporarily proclaimed by the famous San Stefano preliminary treaty. The alternative option seemed much more plausible and advocated the creation of an “autonomous Macedonia” within the Ottoman Empire: a scenario, which was partially facilitated by the 23rd article of the Treaty of Berlin. In general, the “autonomous” or “self-governing” status implied a special kind of Constitution of the region (an Organic law), a reorganization of *gendarmerie*, broader representation of the local non-Muslim population in it as well as in all the administration. In particular, this meant a nomination of a Christian governor general, similar to what happened in Crete or in short-lived Eastern Rumelia.

But the idea of autonomy was not necessarily an autochthonous or “purely Macedonian” one. It must be stated that, in the 1880s, diverse political parties and milieus in the Bulgarian Principality promoted the idea of an “autonomous Macedonia” and sponsored political activity in this sense with a long-term aim at “national unification of Bulgarian people.” According to one of the long-term projects that were developed by Macedonian militants, the autonomous status of the region may serve as a first step towards its eventual

11 According to the expression of Jane Cowan and Keith Brown in Cowan (2000), pp. 3, 8–11.

unification with Bulgaria.¹² This idea seemed a bit more plausible after the successful precedent of 1885 when, despite the provisions of Treaty of Berlin, Eastern Rumelia was united with the Bulgarian Principality.

But another tendency within the Macedonian movement envisaged “autonomous Macedonia” as a basis for the creation of a Pan-Balkan (con)federation: in this case, the neighbors’ territorial appetites would be permanently neutralized. The latter project crystallized in the late 1880s when the Bulgarian government sought to restrain the Macedonian militants in order to obtain certain privileges for the Bulgarian Church and national cause in the region through a political *rapprochement* with the Ottoman Empire. As a result, the Macedonian autonomism obtained an oppositional character and suggested a separate political allegiance based on *supra-national* categories of belonging.

A “draft” of this supra-national ideology is given in the anonymous article “An Opinion Concerning the Resolution of Macedonian Question” published in 1889 in the newspaper *Makedonija* [Macedonia], edited by the Ohrid native, Bulgarian provincial clerk and Macedonian activist Kosta Šahov.¹³ Its author promotes the idea of an independent struggle of the entire population of the region against Ottoman domination. For this task, he recommends the usage of the common denominator “Macedonians” [*makedonci*] for all the ethnic and confessional communities of the region. “We, the Macedonians” [*nie makedoncite*], stresses the anonymous activist, should not desire any unification with a neighbor state whatsoever, as the other neighbors would also try to get their share and Macedonia would be torn up. Regardless of their “nationality” [*narodnost*]-be they “Bulgarians, Turks, Vlachs, etc.”-all Macedonians have “the same interests” and should work for the “political liberty” of their “land.”

The autonomist agenda was given a new impetus after 1893 when six activists founded in Salonica the famous Macedonian revolutionary organization referred to quite often as the “Internal organization.” After a few years, it became an important internal and even international political factor of the “Macedonian Question,” while in the long term it was transformed into one of the basic “myths” claimed both by Bulgarian and modern Macedonian nationalism. However, the first official designation of this organization is still the object of historiographic controversies not only between Bulgarian

12 Cf. Božinov, et al., (1979), p. 662.

13 “Mnenie za rešavanje Makedonskija vâpros”, *Makedonija*, (August 19, 1889).

and Macedonian historians, but also within the Macedonian historiography itself.

According to the Macedonian specialist Ivan Katardžiev, the organization first bore the name “Bulgarian Macedono-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Committees” (BMORK) but, already by 1896, it had changed this designation in favor of “Secret Macedono-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Organization” (TMORO).¹⁴ For obvious reasons, most of today’s Macedonian historians reject the authenticity of the first designation which—moreover—does not exist in the memoirs of the organization’s founders. Referring to this fact as well as to other sources that confirm the Bulgarian ethnic restriction of the first statute of the organization,¹⁵ the Bulgarian historians assume that the founding documents of the latter have still not been discovered and that the name BMORK dates back to 1896–1897.¹⁶

All these debates are not so inconsequential as, for the Bulgarian and for Macedonian historians, what is at stake for this case is to know *when* exactly the organization had abandoned its “narrowly Bulgarian” character. The TMORO statute is clearly supra-national and grants the right of membership to every “Macedonian or Adrianopolitan.” The statute appeals for the unification of all the “unsatisfied elements,” both in Macedonia and in the region of Adrianople, regardless of their “nationality” [*narodnost*]. The general political objective is declared as a “revolution” presumed to achieve the “complete political autonomy” of the two regions.¹⁷

In fact, this autonomist ideology was by no means sophisticated. As the Bulgarian historian Kostadin Palešutski emphasizes, in the language of the Internal organization, the terms “political autonomy,” “complete political autonomy” and “liberty” represented “abstract concepts” that were in diverse documents used in an interchangeable way.¹⁸ In general, there was not a coherent political theory behind the organization’s supra-nationalism. The Bulgarian historians would emphasize likewise that there was not a clear idea of separate statehood behind these slogans either. The organization was largely dependent on the Bulgarian state and army assistance that was mediated by some of the future champions of Macedonian autonomism like Goce Delčev and Gjorče Petrov. The “Adrianopolitan” part of the organization’s name

14 Katardžiev (1961), pp. 156, 162. This version is similarly accepted by Pandevski (1974).

15 Cf. Siljanov (1933), p. 40.

16 Pandev (2000), pp. 140–141.

17 Andonov-Poljanski, et al., (1985), pp. 360–362.

18 Palešutski (1983), p. 289.

indicates that its agenda concerned not only Macedonia but also the Adrianople (Edirne/Odrin) *vilayet* in Thrace whose Bulgarian population is by no means claimed by modern Macedonian nationalism.

Nevertheless, the political emancipation of the Internal organization was catalyzed soon after its creation as a result of certain conflicts between the local “elite” of Bulgarian Church “communes” in Macedonia and the ecclesiastic authorities of the Bulgarian Exarchate that tried to centralize the organization of Church matters, the local school system as well as the nomination of commune chiefs. The organization decisively took the side of local communes and advocated their self-governance. In 1894, one of the revolutionary leaders—Petâr Poparsov—edited, on behalf of the organization, a brochure¹⁹ where he expressed quite a sharp criticism towards the “authoritarian” and “corrupted” course of action of the Bulgarian Church in the region. The Exarchate was directly accused of a dictatorial suppression of the deliberative “liberties” of the local population. At the same time, the clerks of the Exarchate opposed the revolutionary agenda of the organization, the latter being seen as adventurous and harmful to the process of national integration. The Bulgarian Exarch Josif himself considered that the revolutionaries would only complicate the political status quo and hinder the formation of a powerful Bulgarian intelligentsia in Macedonia.

Moreover, violent conflicts followed between the activists of the organization and those who were loyal to the Exarchate. The latter were provoked, according to the Bulgarian historiography, by the differences in their tactics with regard to the idea of “liberation” from the Ottoman regime: revolutionary and based on provoking of large-scale political tension and, respectively, evolutionist and centered on the cultural strengthening of the “Bulgarian nation” in Macedonia.²⁰ However, it is undoubtedly striking that one of the first armed conflicts of the Internal organization was with the followers of the Bulgarian Exarchist policy in the region. Referring to this fact, the Macedonian historiography interprets them in national terms as an “ethnic conflict” between “Macedonians” and “(pro-)Bulgarians.” Some other specialists, by no means unilaterally pro-Macedonian in the modern national sense, also consider that these controversies and reciprocal murders indicate a kind of differentiation of a separate Macedonian identity.²¹

19 Vardarski (1894).

20 Cf. Siljanov (1933), pp. 119–128.

21 Adanir (2002), p. 146.

Still, this interpretation must face some problems: from its perspective, it is difficult to explain, for instance, the fact that the almost exclusive “national” basis of the organization was namely the Exarchist population. The same holds true for the clear domination of the Exarchist social elite within its leadership and of the practical support given to it by the local institutions of the Exarchate. Bulgarian teachers in Macedonia constituted the backbone of the Internal organization while, according to their social profile, its leaders were quite often themselves former Exarchist teachers.²² Though their divergent and conflicting visions, the benevolent attitude of the organization towards the Exarchate as a “national” institution is expressed by as fervent autonomist as the revolutionary Gjorče Petrov.²³ The lack of diverse “ethnic” motivations seems to be confirmed by the fact that, in his brochure, Poparsov generally uses the designation “Bulgaro-Macedonians” and “Macedonian Bulgarians” in order to name his “compatriots.”

All that comes to confirm the difficult translatability of these events in terms of “ethnic” conflict: the Macedonian revolutionaries actually sought to prevent the Bulgarian church authorities from any interference in what they saw as the *political* field, while the Exarchate had its “legitimate” place in the narrowly *national* development. And yet, the separation between “political” (Macedonian) and “national” (Bulgarian) loyalty was already outlined in the discourse of the Macedonian revolutionaries. It was even further confirmed in their armed conflict with another institution—this time an “external” one and established by Macedonian *émigrés* in Bulgaria.

In 1895, a number of diasporic political associations merged into a Sofia-based “Macedonian Committee” that was later named the “Supreme Macedonian” and “Supreme Macedono-Adrianopolitan Committee.” In the dominant Macedonian historiographic vision, the Committee and its activists—the so-called “supremists” [*vrhovisti*]—are opposed to the “internals” or the “centralists” [*centralisti*] from the Internal organization and stigmatized as instruments of the “Greater-Bulgarian” policy of Sofia.

However, both the relations between the Bulgarian governments and the Committee, as well as relations between the latter and the Internal organizations seem more complex than that. Actually, the two centers of Macedonian activism initially cooperated, especially during the time when the Bulgarian army officer Boris Sarafov was in charge of the activists in Sofia.

22 Perry (1988), pp. 144–151, 182–183.

23 Božinov, et al., (1979), p. 557.

Ironically, even before the Internal organization, the first statute of the Supreme Committee declared as a general task of its activity the achieving of a “political autonomy” of Macedonia.²⁴ In the supremacist slogans, the long-term future of the autonomous administrative entity of Macedonia is often indeed not clear, but this lack of precision is by no means limited to the supremists.

The relations between the organization and the Supreme Committee drastically deteriorated only about six years after the setting-up of Sofia’s institution, especially around the ill-fated uprising in the region of Gorna Džumaja (today Blagoevgrad) incited in 1902 by the activists from Sofia and fiercely opposed by the internal ones. In the same year, activists of the Internal organization offered a more coherent declaration of its (supra-)national ideology.

THE POLITICAL SEPARATISM OF THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

In an article, “Political separatism,”²⁵ the revolutionaries promoted as a basic slogan William Gladstone’s expression “Macedonia for the Macedonians” [*Makedonija za makedoncite*] held to express the principle of autonomy and of “political separatism.” Already, the beginning of the text clearly states the meaning of these terms: it is a question of separation of Macedonia *vis-à-vis* “the idea of Greater Bulgaria, or Greater Serbia, or Greater Greece.” The concrete stakes of this agenda are also explained: Macedonia is endangered by “greater or smaller states” and while the “small states of the Balkan peninsula” could not solve the Macedonian question, which is of “European importance,” they only create conditions that would enable their territorial expansion and the partitioning of Macedonia. “Greeks” and “Serbs” are directly accused of such ambitions. However, the Bulgarian Principality is also condemned for “speculating” with the “unhappy Macedonia” in favor of its “ephemeral” political interests. Above and beyond the “harm” which the Balkan states are

24 Contrary to what, for example, the anthropologist Anastasia Karakasidou believes when she speaks of the very “different” agendas of “internals” and “externals,” the latter promoting a “Greater-Bulgarian” solution to the “Macedonian Question”: Karakasidou (1997), p. 100.

25 “Politički separatizam”, *Pravo*, (June 7, 1902). Edited by the Macedonian activists Nikola Naumov and Toma Karajovov, the newspaper *Pravo* [*The Right*] was the unofficial tribune of the Internal organization. Cf. Božinov, et al., (1979), pp. 456–459.

doing to the cause of “Macedonian freedom,” the Macedonian population [*makedonskoto naselenie*] is considered to be biased towards an idea other than the “Greater Bulgaria” of San Stefano.

However, contrary to the impression of researchers who believe that the Internal organization espoused a “Macedonian national consciousness,”²⁶ the local revolutionaries declare their conviction that the “majority” of the Christian population of Macedonia is “Bulgarian.” They clearly reject possible allegations of what they call “national separatism” *vis-à-vis* the Bulgarians and even consider it “immoral.” Though they declare an equal attitude towards all the “Macedonian populations,” the activists’ tolerance has, however, at least one significant limit: they denounce particularly the pretensions of Serbia—who, according to the activists creates “proselytes” where she has no “compatriots.”

The text suggests that the integrity of the region implies the “conservation” of the “national unity of the Bulgarian tribe” (*bălgarskoto pleme*—a term having also a positive meaning in Bulgarian). Paradoxically, through the realization of autonomous Macedonia, it is deemed to remain whole and united through its “spiritual culture,” even though politically divided. The other options entail the risk that a part of the “Bulgarian tribe” falls under Greek, Serbian or other domination. Nevertheless, by the very abandoning of the Bulgarian united nation-state project, the article attempts to trace a kind of distinct supra-national ideology based on modern liberal principles. Considering themselves “protagonists of liberty and culture,” the activists of the Internal organization oppose what they call “denationalization” not only of their own but also of other “peoples” [*narodi*]. The article also gives long-term aspects of Macedonian autonomy that has at stake the “higher idea” of an eventual establishment of a “Balkan confederation.”

However, some basic ambiguities should be taken into account: for instance, the “guarantee” for the preservation of other national communities stems from “the character of the Bulgarian tribe” that, according to Macedonian revolutionaries, could be “proud of its tolerance” in opposition to “Romanians, Serbs and Greeks.” Hence, the administration of “autonomous Macedonia” will rely on a “tolerant” majority, thanks to which all the “Macedonian populations” would be united in “one political entity.” In this manner, the activists of the Internal organization implicitly consider that the Bulgarians should represent a kind of “dominant nation” taking up the role of the

26 Karakasidou (1997), p. 100.

“good master” that will generously manage to consolidate all other “populations,” “nationalities,” “minorities,” “peoples” and “tribes” (these terms being more or less synonymous). Thus, on the one hand, the activists of the organization trace a principal distinction between “national” and “political” in the sense that the political ideal of common “prosperity” entails a supra-national compromise with the narrowly national, ethnic or confessional loyalties. But, considering the idea of the “special character” of “Bulgarians,” one may be tempted to ask the question to what extent this was a “sincere” declaration of intentions.

According to the mainstream Bulgarian historiography, the idea of autonomy represented a pure “tactics” of the revolutionary movement in Macedonia and in Thrace aiming at the eventual unification with the Bulgarian state. Thus, according to some Bulgarian historians, the project of autonomy did not imply any separatism whatsoever, which maybe indicates that the same are either not acquainted, or intentionally neglect the article from 1902.²⁷ Yet, the text of the organization’s activists suggests more or less that the “political separatism” is a contingent solution, imposed by international setting, as the Macedonians are apparently “conscious of the utter impossibility of realizing the idea of Greater Bulgaria.” This may indeed leave the impression that autonomy represents just “the plan B” of Bulgarian “unification.” Moreover, since the article was simultaneously published in French, one must take into account the possibility of intentionally reinforced separatism for purely foreign propaganda reasons: as a rule, the Macedonian activists were adamantly trying to convince European public opinion that the Internal organization was by no means a Bulgarian political pawn even in the periods of close cooperation with Sofia.

However, many political events were capable to reinforce the supra-national “Macedonian” aspect of Macedonian activists. In 1902, they were, for instance, scandalized when a Serbian bishop was finally nominated in the Patriarchist diocese of Skopje: the article states overtly the Macedonian revolutionaries’ indignation from Belgrade but, through its presumed inactivity, the russophile Bulgarian government was likewise suspected of preparing a “brotherly” South-Slavic partition of Macedonia. Thus, ironically, the declaration of “political separatism” was at the same time an expression of Bulgarian ethnic self-identification. This basic ambiguity of political visions may only be

27 Gocev (1983).

acknowledged: undoubtedly, the Macedonian revolutionaries “dwelled much more on the process [...] rather than on the question of the precise political form” of autonomy.²⁸

PATTERNS OF ETHNICIZATION OF MACEDONIAN SUPRA-NATIONAL AUTONOMISM

Despite this supra-national aspect of Macedonian “political” identity, one may easily find writings that bestow this identity also with certain “ethnic” or “cultural” contents. As a political tribune of “the Macedonians” in Bulgaria, *Makedonija* (later named *Glas makedonski*—[The Macedonian Voice]) published by the aforementioned Kosta Šahov asserted a fervent identification with the native land. The newspaper searched for a particular Macedonian historical tradition and promoted the images of ancient Macedonia and of Alexander the Great. The latter is even proclaimed by Šahov the “national pride of Macedonian people.”²⁹

This kind of “national” emancipation should not be, however, overestimated: it should be enough to say that, in 1895, Šahov addressed a telegram to the Russian count Ignatiev in order to congratulate him as the inventor of the Greater Bulgaria of San Stefano.³⁰ *Makedonija* newspaper not only regarded all the Macedonian Slavs like Bulgarians but even tried to convince its public that the same holds true for all the population of Serbia’s South Morava region (Niš, Vranje, etc.).³¹

Similar is the case of a review published by the upcoming Macedonian revolutionaries whom Šahov collaborated with. Macedonian historiography often refers to the group of young activists (in particular, ex-students in Belgrade) who founded in Sofia an association called the “Young Macedonian Literary Society.” In 1892, the latter began publishing the review *Loza* [The Vine] which promoted certain characteristics of Macedonian dialects. At the same time, the activists, called “Lozars” after the name of their review, “purified” the Bulgarian orthography from some rudiments of the Church Slavonic and brought it closer to Vuk Karadžić’s Serbian phonetic script. They expressed likewise a kind of Macedonian patriotism attested already by the

28 Perry (1988), p. 202.

29 *Makedonija*, (November 11, 1888, and March 17, 1889).

30 Burilkova, Biljarski (2003), p. 68.

31 *Makedonija*, (August 19, 1889).

first issue of the review: its materials greatly emphasized identification with Macedonia as a genuine “fatherland.” The editors of *Loza* also referred to the “ancient” dignity of their native region: Phillip of Macedon and Alexander the Great appear already on the fifth page of the first book of the review. All these elements were enough for the governmental press in Sofia to accuse the young Macedonian intellectuals of “separatism” and of possible pro-Serbian stance.

The Lozars did not delay in dispersing these accusations, and gave up their particular “reformed” language and orthography. Although they did not agree so enthusiastically with the character of standard Bulgarian language that was quite distant from Macedonian dialects, the editors of the review suggested that, according to their language, the Macedonians “may only be Bulgarians.”³² In any case, it is hardly surprising that the Lozars demonstrated both Bulgarian and Macedonian loyalty: what is more interesting is namely the fact that their Bulgarian nationalism was somehow harmonized with a Macedonian self-identification that was not only a political one but also demonstrated certain “cultural” contents (language traits, particular history and an emphasized particular geography of the “homeland”). The Lozars’ case only confirms the Fredrick Barth’s idea that the patterns of self-identification are to a large extent the contingent result of a specific interaction within a particular setting.

These activists had afterward different political careers: amongst them, one finds leaders of the Macedonian revolutionary movement (both from the Internal organization and the Supreme Committee), Bulgarian intellectuals and even one future prime minister of Bulgaria. Some of them undoubtedly retained their more pronounced local patriotism: for instance, Petâr Poparsov with his aforementioned brochure where he criticized the Exarchist policy.³³ Thus, the national discourse of some Macedonian revolutionaries may seem to be marked by a *situational ethnicization* in a Macedonian sense.

Such manifestations are to be found also in cases of leaders of the Supreme Committee. The Bulgarian colonel and activist of the Committee Anastas Jankov mentions in his memoirs how, in an attempt to convince a Serbian captain for the need of Macedonian autonomy, he opposed the latter’s assertions that a Macedonian Slavic “nationality” had never existed and gave as a historical proof the medieval state of Samuil.³⁴ According to some data, Boris

32 Cf. *Loza* (1892), pp. 56, 58.

33 Andonov-Poljanski, et al., (1985), pp. 333–336.

34 Burilkova, Biljarski (2003), p. 155.

Sarafov—both a supremacist and centralist—declared the Macedonians to be a distinct “national element.”³⁵

Two ideological currents—the socialists and the anarchists—went far in their demarcation from the mainstream Bulgarian nationalism. The idea of a self-governing Macedonia was emphasized in the very first program of the Macedonian socialists led by Vasil Glavinov and was made more explicit in their newspaper *Političeska svoboda* [The Political Liberty]. The newspaper severely criticized Bulgaria for its ambitions at territorial expansion in the region and appealed for the creation of an independent “federative Macedonian republic,” conceived as a kind of “Balkan Switzerland.” The latter presumed a cantonal organization of all local “national elements” that would have the possibility to choose the official language in the cantons where they constituted the ethnic majority.³⁶ At the same time, this independent Macedonian republic was supposed to have played the role of fundament of another one, broader federation—namely, the one of all the Balkan “peoples.”

Yet, the socialists’ emphasis on a separate political agenda of “Macedonian people” was based on class-ideological aspects which bestowed it with “a-national” aspects. The ambitions of what is labeled “a stupid chauvinism and patriotism” and especially of the “Bulgarian chauvinism” are opposed by the socialists to the idea that “the Macedonian” [*makedonecât*] has to realize, at the first place, “his” class-ideological tasks. That is why, according to *Političeska svoboda*, “the Macedonian” should by no means be regarded as a Bulgarian, Serb or Greek as “he” is, on the first place, a political “slave” [*rob*].³⁷ In some articles of the newspaper (as well as in party documents of the Macedonian socialist group) the term “Macedonian people” [*makedonski narod*] is contrasted with the “Bulgarian people” [*bâlgarski narod*]. For instance, according to one conspicuous expression, “the Bulgarians” are “close in every respect” to “the Macedonian people” which actually asserts the contrast between these two “national” categories.³⁸

It would nevertheless be far-fetched to say that the “Bulgarian” character of Macedonian Slavs is completely rejected. For instance, *Političeska svoboda*

35 See “The Macedonian Agitation”, *The Times*, (April 12, 1901); “Nouvelles d’Orient”, *Pro Armenia*, (April 25, 1901). Both newspapers refer to an interview with Sarafov for the Viennese newspaper *Die Information*.

36 *Političeska svoboda*, (February 6, 1898 and November 29, 1898), pp. 1–2.

37 *Političeska svoboda*, (April 19, 1899).

38 Cf. *Političeska svoboda*, (April 19, 1898), pp. 2, 5.

opposed the Serbian idea that the Macedonians are a kind of Serbo-Bulgarian “paste” and asserted their “Bulgarian” belonging.³⁹ However, in the socialist rhetoric, this ethnic characteristic is definitively not discursively dominant. The political and class imperatives of “liberty” rather emphasized the distinct political tasks of the “Macedonian people,” uniting—contrary to what is seen as “Bulgarian people”—not only “Bulgarians” but a number of other “nationalities.” This terminological *imbroglio* makes the socialist “national” categories quite incommensurable with strict nationalistic Macedonian or Bulgarian concepts nowadays. Hence, while the Bulgarian historians sometimes condemn the “national nihilist” positions of Macedonian socialists, their Macedonian counterparts express frustration that the latter were not sufficiently “aware” of the distinct character of the Macedonian nation.⁴⁰

But, paradoxically, the “a-national” “nihilistic” aspect could acquire, in some moments, a distinct national or ethnic meaning. Such an ethnicization of Macedonian identity is more visible in the marginal anarcho-socialist newspaper *Maleševski Balkan* [The Mountain of Maleševo] that appeared in 1897. In some articles like “At Least do not Hinder Us!,” the newspaper treats the Macedonians as distinct from both Bulgarians and Serbs, these nations otherwise seen as the “closest to us.”⁴¹ However, neither in *Maleševski Balkan* did this Macedonian nationalism seem consistent, as the newspaper also offers articles claiming a Bulgarian identity for the Macedonian Slavs. This paradoxical fact may indicate that, by the turn of the 20th century, the patterns of ethnicization of Macedonian ideology in general remained firmly associated with a political agenda opposing in the first place the nation-states’ aspirations, and did not claim so much a distinct “core” culture.

Such an impression seems confirmed by the mixture of strong internationalist, “a-national” and Macedonian “ethnic” aspects that is also to be found in the ideology of the Macedonian anarchist committee formed at the end of the 1890s by students in Geneva. The anarchists promoted likewise the idea of Macedonia for all the Macedonian “nationalities” and appealed for its complete independence. For this reason, the activists of the committee recommended a ruthless struggle not only against the Greek and Serbian ambitions

39 *Politička svoboda*, (March 29, 1898). The Macedonian socialists likewise advocated the liberation cause of the Adrianople vilayet.

40 Cf. Makedonski naučen institut (1995), pp. 280–281, 284.

41 Andonov-Poljanski, et al., (1985), 364–366.

but also against the “Bulgarian chauvinism” and its aspirations towards the “unification” of Bulgaria and Macedonia.⁴²

One should nevertheless take into account the following paradox: the anarchist organization in Geneva included mostly militants who were natives from Bulgaria and not from Macedonia. The Macedonian historian Ristovski likewise emphasizes that their program of a “Macedonian state” comprised also the Adrianople Thrace, which actually “does not presume [the idea of] a distinct Macedonian national entity.”⁴³ These aspects are undoubtedly difficult to explain from the point of view of Macedonian historiography, but they present a challenge for the Bulgarian one also. The fact that even people of “non-Macedonian descent” espoused a strong Macedonian identity shows a considerable degree of development of a distinct political loyalty, emancipated from the Pan-Bulgarian national project.

ILINDEN AND AFTER: THE MACEDONIAN LEFT-WING AUTONOMISM AGAINST BULGARIAN “STATE NATIONALISM”

Both the supra-national ideology of the Internal organization and the internationalist program of socialists are often thought to have been put into practice during the most important revolutionary event of turn-of-the-20th-century Macedonia—the anti-Ottoman Insurrection of Ilinden (August 1903). According to traditional Bulgarian and Macedonian narratives, Kruševo in the *vilayet* of Manastır, a town inhabited by diverse Christian populations was transformed into an ephemeral “republic” with a temporary revolutionary authority where different “national elements” cooperated.⁴⁴ The famous “Kruševo Republic” was led by a local activist of the Internal organization with a socialist orientation—Nikola Karev—and was supposed to have incarnated the principle of supra-national equality.⁴⁵ With regard to the latter, the most emphasized moment seems to have been the elaboration of the so-called “Kruševo Manifesto”—a letter announcing the creation of “Autonomous Ma-

42 See the letters of Petăr Mandžukov and Slavi Merdžanov published in Andonov-Poljanski, et al., (1985), pp. 372–375.

43 Ristovski (2001), p. 390.

44 On diverse narratives concerning the “Kruševo republic”: Brown (2003).

45 Ristovski regrets the fact that the “government” of the “republic” (nowadays held to be a symbol of Macedonian statehood) was actually composed of two “Greeks,” two “Bulgarians” and one “Romanian”: cf. Ristovski (2001).

cedonia" that was addressed from the local militants to neighboring Muslim villages in order to convince them that revolutionary activities were not directed against the peaceful "Turkish" population but solely against the Sultan's "tyranny."⁴⁶

However, the original of this manifesto has not been preserved: current Macedonian historiography refers to a text that was suggested about 20 years after by a Kruševo-born playwright. Regardless of whether such a document existed or not, the "Kruševo Republic," which survived only about ten days, was certainly far from being an "oasis" of inter-communitarian cohabitation. Greek sources attest an aggressive or provocative attitude of the insurgents towards the local "Greek" population while, despite the presumably "tolerant" attitude towards Muslim population, the rebels of Ilinden attacked Muslim villages and numerous "Turkish" peasants became the victims of revolutionary terror. The cruel response of Ottoman authorities and the final catastrophe of the ill-fated uprising only increased the controversies existing within the Internal organization.

Two ideological wings, which had already been partially structured before the summer of 1903, finally took shape. Gjorče Petrov became the spokesman for the independentism of the organization with regard to the "nationalistic propagandas" of Balkan states, including Bulgaria. At the same time, other important activists like Dame Gruev were still inclined towards a close political cooperation with Sofia. While activists from the so-called "right wing" insisted on the reinforcement of what the latter called "national color" [*nacionalen kolorit*] of the organization, the "leftists" opposed the Bulgarian "nationalistic line" [*nacionalističeski kurs*].⁴⁷ According to them, a more pronounced Bulgarian stance could only be harmful to the supra-national ideals and incite a further internal division of the Macedonian population due to a similar intensification of Greek and Serbian "propagandas" in the region.⁴⁸

The general Congress of the Internal organization in 1905 (the so-called "Rila Congress") turned the general political line decisively to the "left" by the adopting the main visions of the revolutionaries from the Serres department led by Jane Sandanski. The organization changed its name to VMORO ("Internal Macedono-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Organization") and its statute reasserted the ideology of supra-nationalism: members of the organization could be "anybody" from "European Turkey" independently of his or her "sex,

46 Andonov-Poljanski, et al., (1985), pp. 432-434.

47 Siljanov (1943), pp. 67-68.

48 Cf. Adanir (2002), p. 213.

religion, nationality and conviction [*ubeždenie*—i.e., partisan orientation].” The statute specified that “The Organization opposes the aspirations for partition and conquest of these regions [Macedonia and Adrianopolitan Thrace] without regard for from what state they originate.”⁴⁹

Quite indicative for the leftists’ ideology seems also that the attitude formulated by the Rila Congress *vis-à-vis* the Bulgarian Exarchate: the organization declared its intention to counter the activities of the latter “that are led in the spirit of the Bulgarian state nationalism.” The Bulgarian historian from the interwar period (and Macedonian activist) Hristo Siljanov and the Bulgarian specialists nowadays do not find a real explanation for the “anti-naturality” and the “lack of any reason whatsoever” in such formulations. The activists of the revolutionary departments of Serres, Strumica and Salonica nonetheless stipulated that the “Macedonian Question” could not be resolved if it was formulated as a part of a Bulgarian national question. In this manner, the policy of Sofia was completely identified with the adversary character of Athens and Belgrade: Bulgaria was clearly treated by the Serres activists as a “foreign, hostile force”⁵⁰ and Sandanski condemned what he called “Bulgarian imperialism.” According to him, the Macedonians had to emancipate themselves as a “self-determining people.”⁵¹

To what extent do all these declarations mean that, subsequent to the Ilinden catastrophe in 1903, the supra-national program of Macedonian revolutionaries gave birth to a Macedonian nationalism? Macedonian mainstream specialists on the history of local revolutionary movement, such as Katardžiev, consider that the political separatism of Internal organization represented indeed a form of Macedonian nationalism.⁵² However, the first problem before such an interpretation stems in particular from the “Macedono-Adrianopolitan” character of the Internal organization during its “classical” period, i.e., the one prior to the Balkan wars. The statutes and directives of the Central Committee as well as the other official documents of the organization (written in the Bulgarian language) concern not only the “Macedonian people” but also the “Adrianopolitans” or “the Adrianople people,” i.e., the Bulgarians and (at least in theory) other “nationalities” inhabiting the *vilayet* of Adrianople. This fact, as well as the acceptance of Bulgarians from Bulgaria and from the Ottoman Thrace into the leading ranks of the Internal organiza-

49 Siljanov (1943), pp. 393–394.

50 Makedonski naučen institut (1997), pp. 67–68.

51 Siljanov (1943), p. 498.

52 Katardžiev (2003), pp. 54–69.

tion not only corroborates the fact that the Macedonian activists did not insist on any own “ethnic” peculiarity and difference with regard to the Bulgarians, but may also undermine the idea of a distinct national emancipation on a purely “political” basis.

Besides, the natives of territories outside Macedonia often demonstrated a much greater criticism, independentist fervor and even hostility *vis-à-vis* Sofia, than the local militants. It could seem quite paradoxical that it was exactly the polemical declarations of leaders like Hristo Černošev⁵³ that provoked the greatest indignation within Bulgarian public opinion as well as among the (pro-)Bulgarian intelligentsia of Macedonia with the flat identification of official Bulgarian policy to that of Serbia and Greece. Hence, one may hardly discover a correspondence between the place of origin of the Internal organization’s activists and their political visions, in particular, their attitude towards the ideas of Macedonian autonomy. That is why, for some specialists, even the most “separatist” trend within the Internal organization could be seen as an extreme form of the Bulgarian leftist movement from that period.⁵⁴

Similar problems appear when one takes into account the aforementioned rank and file relations between the organization and the Bulgarian Exarchate. On the one hand, even in their conflicts with Exarchist activists, the Macedonian revolutionaries were not really interested in confessional matters: the latter were related to the “national” development which had its place inside the community, while the political agenda of common action of all the “Macedonian people” transcended the confessional particularities. This idea is asserted by the socialist Dimo Hadžidimov, who stated that the organization “holds above all religious and national aspirations the banner of the liberation struggle.”⁵⁵ On the other hand, on Macedonian terrain, the Internal organization often took the side of the Bulgarian Exarchate against the Greek-speaking Constantinople Patriarchate as well as against Serbian Church “propaganda.”⁵⁶ All these aspects of the organization’s activity make visibly difficult its translation into the terms of Macedonian nationalism. However, although

53 Hristo Černošev, revolutionary leader of the Strumica department, champion of the Macedonian autonomism and fighter against the attempts of Sofia to control the revolutionary movement, was actually born in Northern Bulgaria (Dermanci) and was a former officer of the Bulgarian army.

54 Adanir (2002), p. 146.

55 Andonov-Polanski, et al., (1985), p. 519.

56 The favorable attitude of Macedonian revolutionaries towards the Exarchist church affiliation is confirmed in Ristovski (2001), p. 53.

they do not contradict the idea of Bulgarian ethnicity and of Bulgarian nation *within* Macedonia, the aforementioned autonomist and independentist stances may hardly be seen as an expression of a mainstream Bulgarian nationalism or, to put it into indigenous terms, of a “Bulgarian state nationalism.” The separatist motives in the organization’s ideology, emphasized after Ilinden, rather reinforced the supra-national agenda.

MACEDONIAN “OTTOMANISM” ON THE LEFT

It would be quite misleading to try to explain all aforementioned ideological phenomena as a “purely” autochthonous trend regardless of “external” influences and transfers. The revolutionary means, structure and discourses of Macedonian liberation movement were undoubtedly under the strong influence of the Bulgarian revolutionary tradition. Even the anti-Exarchist pathos of Macedonian revolutionaries is partially inspired by previous anti-clerical revolutionary slogans in Bulgaria. Some historians also refer to the influence of international socialist movement, of Russian anarchism and of Armenian anti-Ottoman revolutionary movement on the rhetoric and the methods of Macedonian activists. However, one basic impact remains occulted by both Bulgarian and Macedonian national historiographies—the Ottoman one, as paradoxical as the existence of such may seem.

A comparison of Macedonian autonomist rhetoric with the official Ottomanist discourse would demonstrate striking typological similarities and could make more understandable the supra-national character of Macedonian revolutionary ideology.⁵⁷ Here are the main common points: the appeal for *brotherly cohabitation* of different “peoples” and “faiths” for the sake of the common “prosperity” and “progress,” hence, the idea itself of converging *common interests* of diverse populations as an instrumental argumentation in favor of a supra-national political project. Also, the idea of justice and of *equal treatment* of every national and/or confessional group, guaranteed by the essential *tolerance* of the “leading” element—the Muslim religion as a “religion of tolerance” in the Ottomanist discourse and the “tolerant Bulgarian national character” claimed by the aforesaid article on Macedonian political separatism. Quite indicative are a number of terminological coincidences as “regardless of religion and sect” in the Ottomanist discourse and “regardless of nationality”

57 Cf. Alexander Vezenkov’s contribution to this collective volume.

in the statute of TMORO, as well as “regardless of sex, religion, nationality and conviction” in VMORO’s statute. Last, but not least, there is another important characteristic of Ottomanism, as well as of both the Macedonian supra-nationalism and nationalism in the long run: the distrust of “foreigners,” or the basic rejection of adverse “foreign interests.” While the Ottomanist rhetoric opposed harshly the intrusion of Europeans in the internal affairs of the Empire, Macedonian autonomist slogans implied similarly that it was only “internal” people who could deal in a proper way with the problems of the region.

Considering all these elements, the Macedonian supra-nationalism may seem to be a kind of “mini-Ottomanism,” i.e., a translation of the Empire’s ideology into the smaller scope of Macedonia (and the Adrianople Thrace) as well as into the language of a liberation movement. Ironically but—from this point of view—not surprisingly, in 1908, it was exactly the stubborn left autonomists from Serres department who found a common language with their former enemies in the face of the Young Turks’ Committee of Union and Progress. During the first days of Young Turks’ revolution, the collaboration of the Macedonian leftists with the Ottoman activists was stated in a special “Manifesto to all the nationalities of the Empire” through which Jane Sandanski called his “compatriots” to discard the “propaganda” of official Bulgaria in order to live together in a peaceful way with the “Turkish people.”⁵⁸ The loyalty to the Empire declared by Sandanski repeated to a large extent the political principles of the Committee of Union and Progress and deliberately blurred the distinction between Macedonian and Ottoman political agenda. This ideological transition was quite smooth, as long as the rhetoric of Macedonian autonomist supra-nationalism was quite close to the Ottomanist idea of the so-called “unity of the elements.”

The “anti-Bulgarian” character of Sandanski’s “Manifesto” still did not mean a Macedonian nationalism, not only because of the loyalty declared to the Empire, but also because its author was in fact Pavel Deliradev—a socialist who too was non-Macedonian in origin.⁵⁹ During the “honeymoon” of Serres revolutionaries and Ottoman authorities, it was the “internationalist” ideas of Bulgarian socialist activists that left their stamp on Sandanski’s as well as on Černošev’s agenda: what were seen as “national interests” had to be subordinated to the Pan-Ottoman ones in order to achieve a supra-national “un-

58 Adanir (2002), p. 258.

59 Makedonski naučen institut (1997), p. 228.

ion” of all the nationalities within a reformed Empire. Thus, a number of classical liberal ideas, put forward in the Young Turks’ constitutionalism, intermingled with some characteristics of socialism, imported from Bulgaria.

Such principles were, for instance, announced by a political program, published in August 1908 by the Serres, Strumica and Salonica revolutionary activists. It emphasizes the principle of popular sovereignty, and appeals for a democratic constitutional regime based on it. At the same time, it calls for a further decentralization and local autonomy within the Empire.⁶⁰ As to the statute of Macedonia and of the Adrianople *vilayet*, the document is not specific. It only emphasizes the “wider autonomy” of “the provinces” in the framework of the Empire as well as of all the “districts” and “communes” within them. This autonomy was presumed in a way to guarantee the equality of all “nationalities” and confessions.

In fact, the leftist agenda replaced the slogan of “autonomy” with the idea of federalizing the Ottoman Empire, albeit with its integrity maintained. At the same time, it was ironically the rightist activists, closely aligned to Sofia, who defended the idea of Macedonian autonomy. Under the conditions of the new constitutional period of the Ottoman Empire, activists from both wings of the (meantime quasi-dissolved) Internal organization formed diverse political parties aspiring to parliamentary representation.

Of all the political trends, the Macedonian historiography refers once again mostly to the faction of Sandanski that took the name “People’s Federative Party”: it is regarded as the “authentically” Macedonian one. Yet, Sandanski’s party was supposed to comprise in its framework a number of ethnic sections, each one representing a distinct “nationality” of Macedonia. Its agenda expressed the federalist visions of the revolutionary left wing that addressed all the communities of “European Turkey.”

This federalist project, however, failed and the only section that was set up within the “People’s Federative Party” was the one of Sandanski himself and of his “co-nationals,” which was actually called the “Bulgarian section.” Moreover, the political and parliamentary representation of the leftist revolutionary activists only “revived” their Bulgarian national identification, as Sandanski’s faction advocated the particular interests of the “Bulgarian nationality” in the Empire.⁶¹ Meanwhile, the gradual conflict of the activists’ aspirations and the Ottoman “national” or quasi-national project of the Young

60 Andonov-Poljanski, et al., (2002), pp. 543–546.

61 Cf. Božinov, et al., (1979), pp. 566–571.

Turks' régime invigorated the revolutionary idea of the "complete political autonomy" of the Macedonia and Adrianople Thrace, leading to the re-establishing of the Internal organization in 1911.

One aspect of the brief collaboration between the left-wing activists and the Committee of Union and Progress seems obvious: while the Balkan national historiographies tend to eliminate any possible Ottoman influence on the "national" movements claimed by them, the case of Macedonian supra-nationalism only shares the peculiarities of Ottomanist propaganda before and during the Young Turks' régime. And, just like Ottomanism, which was interpreted as fully-fledged nationalism by West Europeans even before it acquired the same meaning for the Ottoman Muslims themselves, from a "Western" perspective, the Macedonian supra-national emancipation was (and still is) sometimes mistakenly seen as a Macedonian nationalism.⁶² However, this does not mean that such nationalism did not exist.

FROM POLITICAL TO NATIONAL SEPARATISM?

Even before the period under scrutiny, certain writings attest to the existence of a Macedonian nationalism. Here, the first most illustrative case is the one of the autodidact Gjorgjija Pulevski who, in the beginning of the 1870s, published the first short dictionaries of "Slavo-Macedonian" language. Later, in other writings, he asserted the "Slavic" character of ancient Macedonians and, *vice versa*, the "ancient" descent of today's Macedonian Slavs. Thus in the 1870s and 1880s, began the first manifestations of a Macedonian national ideology that referred explicitly to a particular Macedonian language, descent or folk culture, distinct from those of Bulgarians, Serbs, etc.

Macedonian historians refer also to some data from the anti-Ottoman movement for national "liberation" which presumably confirm a certain attempt for emancipation *vis-à-vis* the neighboring nations and a more "ethnic" usage of the term "Macedonians." The latter is to be found in the so-called "Rules Constitution" of a "Committee of the Macedonian Uprising" as well as in its "Military directives" that are deemed to be composed during the ill-fated uprising of Kresna-Razlog in the autumn of 1878.⁶³ These documents trace a project of administrative structure of a future autonomous Macedonian state

62 E.g., Hroch (1985), pp. 29, 174.

63 Andonov-Poljanski, et al., (1985), pp. 267-284.

while the Slavs from the region are named “Macedonians” instead of Bulgarians or Serbs.

The Bulgarian historians denounce the authenticity of both documents.⁶⁴ But even if one assumes that they are authentic, they were literally “excavated” by modern historians: the marginal influence of theirs is confirmed by the fact that they left virtually no trace in the public sphere of the late 19th century. There are nevertheless some cases, which had a public impact.

In 1891–1892, the Bulgarian bishop of Skopje, Teodosija Gologanov, cut his allegiance to the Exarchate and asserted in a similar way an ethnic difference between Macedonians and their Orthodox Christian neighbors. By the time of the Balkan wars and the first division of Macedonia, these ideas were most fervently defended by a group of activists who already in 1903 had founded in St. Petersburg a “Slavo-Macedonian Scholarly Literary Society.” Its leader—Dimitrija Čupovski—is the author of a number of articles and memoranda appealing for an independent Macedonian state that were published in his newspaper *Makedonskij golos* [The Macedonian Voice].⁶⁵ This political project was no longer a supra-national one, as Macedonia was in the first place conceived as the state of “Macedonian Slavs,” both non-Bulgarian and non-Serbian by ethnicity. It is exactly this ideological trend that was generally (self-)identified as *national separatism*, and may be regarded as “fully-fledged” Macedonian nationalism. Its most important theorist is the philologist and journalist Krste Misirkov, an activist of Čupovski’s circle, who formulated its basic principles in his political pamphlet “On Macedonian matters.”⁶⁶

Misirkov’s national separatism is most resolutely declared in his *volksgeistig* emphasis on a separate Macedonian national language considered to be the harbor of the national spirit [*narodniot duh*]. His text is actually the first serious attempt at standardizing the Macedonian language. At the same time, “On Macedonian matters” contains some conceptual oscillations and rudiments from the doctrine of Macedonian supra-national political identity. For instance, although he speaks on behalf of “we, the Macedonians (Slavs)” [*nie, makedoncite (slovenite)*], Misirkov refers likewise to “other Macedonian nationalities” [*druzite makedoncki narodnosti*] like the Vlachs or the Albanians. Even the pro-Serbian and pro-Greek Macedonian Slavs are labeled as “nationalities” [*narodnosti*], which actually contradicts the idea of a unique Slavic element. At the same time, the Macedonians are designated consecutively not

64 Hristov (1983).

65 Andonov-Poljanski, et al., (1985), pp. 595–605, 610–617.

66 Misirkov (1903).

only as a “nationality” but also as a “population” [*naselenie or žitelstvo*] and “people” [*narod*], the meaning of this term being especially ambiguous. “People” could refer exclusively to the Slavs or, similarly to the supra-national usage, to all the ethnic or confessional elements. Misirkov speaks, for instance, of the relations between “the Macedonian peoples” [*makedonckite narodi*], of the “convergence of interests of all Macedonian peoples.” The term “nation” appears rarely and is contrasted to the term “nationality”: e.g., Misirkov suggests that, in Macedonia, there are many “nationalities” [*nacionalnosti*] while “a distinct Macedonian Slavic nation [*naciia*]” does not yet exist (p. 46). This usage actually implies that the “nation” is seen as a political phenomenon of a “higher” degree, transcending a multiplicity of actual ethnic and/or confessional particularities. Here, quite in the same way as the revolutionary political separatism, the common designation “Macedonians” is recommended as an inter-communitarian compromise [*kompromis*]. But this time, despite all inconsistencies in the text, this compromise concerns mostly, if not exclusively, the Slavs of the region, the latter being affiliated to three different “propagandas”: Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian.

Referring to Misirkov’s text, today’s Macedonian historiography assumes that the Macedonian supra-national ideology led “naturally” to a distinct nationalism. But this transition is far from being non-problematic, and the bridge between political and national separatism is anything but obvious. The Internal organization’s leaders rejected the national-separatist idea of promoting the Macedonian into a distinct language.⁶⁷ They opposed Misirkov’s program and his book seems to have been burned in Sofia by TMORO activists. When, in 1905, Čupovski tried to organize a “Pan-Macedonian conference” in Veles, he was expelled from the town by a local chief of the Internal organization.⁶⁸ At the same time, the Macedonian nationalists did not recognize their program even in the allegedly “anti-Bulgarian” autonomism of Sandanski and, in 1914, accused him of “non-Macedonian” activity.⁶⁹

And, on the other hand, the context of the Balkan wars and of the First World War resulted in a new transmutation of the political affiliations as all the revolutionaries, including the most leftist ones, sided with the Bulgarian state and army against the aspirations of the other Balkan countries in Macedonia. All this shows the inconsistent character of the autonomism promoted by the local activists, for whom the idea of a “Greater Bulgaria” seems to have

67 Cf. *Makedonski pregled*, (July 25, 1905), p. 68.

68 Ristovski (2001), p. 35.

69 Ristovski (1999), p. 458.

always been a possible alternative—especially, if such a “successful” scenario promised to preserve the integrity of their Macedonian “fatherland.” What is more, in some cases, even Krste Misirkov defended the cause of Bulgarian nationalism and, after the First World War, switched several times from the Bulgarian to the Macedonian one and *vice versa*.⁷⁰

CONCLUSION

Contrary to the Bulgarian historiographic point of view, the autonomist revolutionary tradition undoubtedly contributed to the formation of modern Macedonian nationalism. It promoted in the long run a concurrent political loyalty that generated new symbolic boundaries and, in this manner and in certain contexts, also transformations of the sense of ethnicity. Already in 1903, the anarchist Pavel Šatev, future participant in (and victim of) the Yugoslav Macedonian state leadership, witnessed this process of ethnic or national differentiation. In Salonica’s prison of Yedikule, he saw people who were feeling themselves “only as Bulgarians” but there were also others who stated that, while they were Bulgarians by “nationality,” felt above all “Macedonians.”⁷¹

This, and the hitherto mentioned cases actually reveal the shifting boundaries of Macedonian self-identification and the multiple régimes of its exclusivity, *vis-à-vis* other identity options. Although Bulgarians by national self-identification and supra-nationalists as a political theory, the local revolutionaries ironically created some of the premises that the specific political setting after the First World War transformed into a more influential Macedonian nationalism, decisively generalized in federal Yugoslav Macedonia. Therefore, the idea that the Macedonian national ideology and identity was created by political fiat is as misleading as is theoretically ignorant the question of since *when* exactly a Macedonian nation has existed.

70 From this point of view, Misirkov’s case seems quite similar to the one of Şemseddin Sami Frashëri—both Albanian and Turkish nationalist from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. See Bülent Bilmez’s article in this collective volume.

71 Šatev (1934), p. 319.

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HISTORY AND CHARACTER

Visions of National Peculiarity in the Romanian Political Discourse of the 19th Century

BALÁZS TRENCSENYI

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ROMANTIC PARADIGM OF NATIONAL SPECIFICITY

As in most European cases, some aspects of the Romanian discourse of national peculiarity can be traced back to the humanist genre of “*Descriptio*” of the land, narrating the origins and political history of the respective people, a genre which in the Danubian Principalities reached its climax in the works of the erudite Moldavian prince-scholar Dimitrie Cantemir (1673–1723).¹ The works rooted in the humanist *chorographical* paradigm of course had a very different discursive function and referential basis than the characterological constructions underpinning the projects of modern nationhood and state-building, emerging from the late 18th century onwards, making “national individuality” a key argument of political self-legitimization. Some references to this national individuality can be identified in the political and cultural works of the Transylvanian Greek Catholic elite, which sought to anchor the historical-institutional identity of Transylvanian Romanians in a genealogical construction. They were stressing customs and behavior as the proof of continuity with the Roman colonists of Dacia and accidentally, even the concept of “character” surfaced in some of their writings. Simultaneously, the cultural-geographical literature stemming from the Danubian Principalities (often by travelers or cosmopolitan intellectuals, whose work can be related to more than one national tradition, such as the Greek Daniil Philippide or Dionisie Fotino, both of whom authored geographical descriptions of these lands, or the French *Encyclopédiste*, J. L. Carra) sought to put these polities on the map of Europe, making references to the customs of the inhabitants. Significantly, the concept of character was already able to become politicized in the late 18th century, as was the case with the reformist discourse of the Moldavian

1 See his *Descriptio Moldaviae* (written between 1714–1716); modern edition: Cantemir (1986).

boyar Ionică Tăutul, who deplored the loss of patriotic identification and the growth of egoism on the part of the ruling elite.²

The discourse of characterology came to the forefront of literature due to the volume of poetry by the pre-Romantic Barbu Paris Mumuleanu³ (1794–1837), entitled *Characteruri* [Characters] (1825), which, however, did not focus on national character but, following Theophrastus⁴ and La Bruyère, dealt with the various social types of his country, such as old and poor noblemen, the women, the hypocrite, the flatterer, the scholar, etc. The work had a sharp critical edge in view of the state of national culture, becoming explicit especially in the long introductory essay.⁵ The Enlightenment-type critical tone is thus interwoven with a number of references to national identity, deriving the collapse of common good and the flourishing of egoism from the loss of patriotism. Along these lines, Mumuleanu rejects the aping of French fashion, the “lack of good learning,” loss of national pride and the “ambition of patriotism,” and especially the fact that his compatriots “are ashamed to be called Romanians.”⁶

Conceptualizing the national character became of considerable importance in the late 1830s and especially the 1840s, with the emergence of a new public sphere on both sides of the Carpathians, together with the advent of political journalism and the crystallization of new intellectual directions such as literary criticism or political theory. The inherent ambiguity of these early texts dealing with the characterization of the nation was due to the presumption that Romanian “national culture” was practically non-existent, therefore the task of the elite was to create one, valorizing the character-traits of the community but making a qualitative jump. This temporal projection into the future can be seen in the work of one of the first social theoreticians, Florian Aaron (1805–1887), who argued that it was exactly patriotism that was going to create a truly national character.⁷ At the same time, rather than by reference

2 “Fugiți! Rușinați-vă de voi înșivă! Tânguiți-vă, căc v-ați vândut haractirul!” [Run away! Be ashamed of yourselves! Weep because you sold your character!]. See I. Tăutul, *Scrieri social-politice* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1974), p. 92, quoted by Stanomir (2004), p. 74.

3 On Mumuleanu, see Popovici (1972), p. 95; Cornea (1972), p. 215–218; and Piru (1977), pp. 725–734.

4 Actually, the Theophrastian model was popular in neo-Hellenic literature of the late-18th century and the text by Dimitrios Darvaris (1757–1823), dating 1795, also reached the Romanian readership.

5 “Procuvîntare,” in Mumuleanu (1972).

6 Mumuleanu (1972), pp. 89–90.

7 Apart from Aaron’s famous article “Patria, patriotul, patriotism,” Ștefan Lemny (1986) lists a number of other examples of the use of the concept of national character such as the

to the political framework, nationality could only be defined in view of shared customs, thus references to national character came to be applied not only as the end-result but also of the starting point of future-oriented political projects, such as in the work of Theodor Diamant, the ideologist of the *phalanstère* at Scăieni, who, in his writings, referred to the good character (*"haracterul cel bun"*) of the Romanians as the basis of his utopian project.⁸

The emerging Romantic "national characterology" was thus inherently connected to the vision of progress and became an important ideological building block of the new national discourse. What is more, this intertwining of past, present and future through the concept of character made these "characterological" references crucial in the formulation of various visions of "national progress." The construction of national character became entangled in a complex negotiation between the narrative of linear progress and the critique of the recent past in contrast to heroic antiquity; the cult of the West and the ambition to connect the values of modernity to the archaic culture of Romanian peasants; the praise of ancestral customs and the growing consciousness of the unavoidable dissolution of patriarchal social ties.

With all this ambiguity, the overall tone of the Romantic narratives of cultural development was future-oriented, rooted in the vision of irretrievable progress. The keyword of civilization, which drew on the late Enlightenment paradigm of civility and *politesse*, was at the core of a great number of political and cultural manifestos. Civilization, however, was almost never identified with mere material progress, but always had a strong moral-political component. For the historian and future politician, Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817–1891), civilization involved (most of all) political emancipation, while two prominent teachers of the elite St. Sava college in Bucharest, the Transylvanian-born Ioan Maiorescu (1811–1864) and the Wallachian Simeon Marcovici (1802–1877) both connected civilization to the functioning of institutions serving the common good, in contrast to material welfare.⁹ Along similar lines, the Moldavian poet and scholar Gheorghe Asachi (1788–1869) subscribed to the vision of continuous progress, but at the same time depicted the dangers of moral corruption in the form of growing egoism.

article "Însușiri naționale ale englezilor și franțezilor" (*România*, 1838), or "Caracteristica națiilor europene" (*Albina*, 1846). See Lemny (1986), p. 144.

8 Theodor Diamant, [Comerciu], in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, p. 10.

9 Simeon Marcovici, "Civilizația," in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, pp. 230–239.

The nation being in a transitory situation, wedged between barbarism and civilization, thus became a characteristic *topos* of describing the collective self. The essays by Cezar Bolliac (*Poezia populară*, 1844; *Poezia*, 1846) described civilization based on borrowings from Western societies as a source of happiness, but sought to connect this to the archaism of the Romanian population, pointing out that cultural borrowing should also take into account the national character of the given people on the receiving end of the civilizational transfer. He thus stressed the need to search for the character of every nation in folklore, descending to the matrix of the nation through physiognomy, and taking into account climatic factors. Bolliac defined poetry as the most archaic cultural phenomenon, linked to the cradle of civilization—which he saw in India—and carrying the traces of ancient systems of legislation. At the same time, he was also aware of the gap between national archaism and the envisioned world of civility. His proposed solution was to mediate between these seemingly incompatible structures with the help of the aesthetic sphere, turning poetry into a “positive and real direction”: envisioning the modern poet as the priest of a secularized religion, preaching liberty and equality. The poet is called to return to his folklore tradition, while using it consciously to create a modern culture, as the agent of nation building, projecting normative national character on the future—turning the “people” into a “nation.” A decade later, Bolliac proposed an even fuller theory of national character in his *Mozaicul social* (1858), defining Romanianness in terms of climatic determination, stressing that the Romanians were fatally wedged between the poles of north and south, past and future, archaism and modernity. As he pointed out, the changing climate of the Danubian lands resulted in a capricious national character, the mixture of barbarism and civilization, Orient (characterized by the preponderance of sentiments) and Occident (rational aspirations).

What qualified this ideological construction was the assertion—which went together with the notion of civilization from the very beginning of its use in the Romanian context, and which later came to exert an extremely powerful influence—that progress in some sense was imposed from outside. This made some of the proponents of civilization the straightforward partisans of import: in the Enlightened language of political economy, Ion Ghica (1816–1897) for instance stressed the need for exchange with other peoples connecting industry and freedom,¹⁰ while, in a much more radical tone, the Romantic ideologist Ion C. Brătianu went as far as to propose self-colonization as a project of

10 Ion Ghica, “Invățăturii publice,” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, p. 25.

modernity, pointing out that with the assimilation of Romanians into French culture, France would have the advantages of a colony without having to maintain it with military force.¹¹ More often, however, even in those works which were committed to a linear and universalist vision of progress, the idea of imported modernity raised some doubts, opening the space for contrasting cosmopolitanism and national character, or debating the relationship of imported goods and ideas and the local tradition. Gradually, imitating the West became problematized, and tellingly, criticism of the West was also often formulated with reference to Western models of organicity and authenticity. For instance, while discussing language reform, the historian Alexandru Papadopol-Calimah (1833–1898) stressed the need to imitate to some extent the more advanced languages, but proposed a “Fénelonian” reformism, i.e., moderation in changing the local norms.¹²

In the programmatic essay by Ion C. Brătianu,¹³ entitled *Naționalitatea* (published in 1853 while the author was in emigration) we find the same clash of an evolutionary vision and the search for authentic models to emulate, mediated by the discourse of national character. Brătianu started from the assertion of the infinite richness of humankind, marked by the multiplicity of forms but also by the unity of human genius. In this interpretation “character” is the *differentia specifica* of nationalities—assuming physiognomic, moral and affective traits. Brătianu sought to integrate this into a scheme of “stadial history,” stressing that nations themselves were historical products, evolving towards greater difference over centuries. In antiquity, there were no real nations and thus national character itself was constituted by a historical process. This construction allowed for a complex model of ethnogenesis, pointing out that modern nations were products of ethnic mixing. Brătianu qualified this perspective with the assertion that not every human type was able to mix fruitfully, thus, for instance, the fusion of Celtic and Latin races yielded successful progenies, while other combinations were less viable, such as the mixing of Latin and Slavonic blood.

Brătianu’s stadial model of evolution did not preclude the need to regulate progress—since every nation had its own personality (in *Bilanțul situațiunii*, from 1858, he talked about “vital principles”), civilization could not be im-

11 Ion C. Brătianu, “Memoria asupra românilor dat imparatului Napoleon III,” in I. C. Brătianu (1921), p. 120.

12 Alexandru Papadopol-Calimah, “Limba românească,” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, pp. 298–300.

13 Ion C. Brătianu, “Naționalitatea,” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. I, pp. 471–494.

posed from outside because the outcome of such an artificial mismatch would be an unproductive “bastard.” At the same time, in line with his vision of fruitful racial mixing, he clearly considered some of the cultural directions more desirable than others, and linked Romanianness to a pan-national framework of Latinity, stressing that organic cultural influences were necessarily coming from kin-peoples.

NATIONALIZING THE PAST, HISTORICIZING THE NATION

The dynamic relationship of “universal” and “peculiar” can be seen in the discussions on the use of local historical traditions in the process of nation building and the creation of a new national ideology. There was a consensus among all the cultural and political authors of the time that “national history” was the basis of any project of regeneration. Back in the 1830s, Florian Aaron wrote that the history of the *patria* was a mirror in which to “see the future.”¹⁴ From his perspective, losing history implied losing nationality itself, as had happened during the long Slavonic cultural domination over the Romanian cultural substrate.

On the other hand, the precise way of instrumentalizing this local historical tradition to support a political project was highly contested. One can speak of two distinct narratives—revolutionary and evolutionary—which were gradually taking shape in the 1840s, even though they retained many common traits. As for the revolutionary use of national past, the obvious case in point is the most important ideologist of the revolutionary movement in the Danubian Principalities, Nicolae Bălcescu (1819–1852). Already at the beginning of his publicist career, Bălcescu stressed the need for creating a canon of national history, defining it a sign of the Romanians’ emergence from barbarism.¹⁵ As to the precise form of this history, Bălcescu made constant reference to Jules Michelet, asserting that what was needed was a history of institutions rather than one of rulers. Consequently, Bălcescu’s new historical narrative, focusing on “the Romanian people,” was based on a stadial theory of progress, with a special interest in folklore as a source for national history in the absence of other sources.

14 Aaron, “Precuvântare la idee repede de istoria Prințipatului Țării Rumânești,” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, pp. 141–149.

15 “Magazin istoric pentru Dacia” in Bălcescu (1974), pp. 87–91.

Bălcescu set forth a discourse of Romanianness in terms of a “continuous progress”—“a historical evolution to get closer to God,” fusing an evolutionary and a providentialist narrative and thus legitimating the radical democratic political agenda in a quasi-theological language. According to Bălcescu, a nation is worthy of existence in so far as it ultimately contributes to the evolution of humankind towards further perfection. In his opinion, the Romanian nation had been at the forefront of the struggle for “the realization of the Divine Law,”¹⁶ that is, the establishment of universal liberty, equality and fraternity.

Throughout their troubled history, the specific features of the Romanians, such as the egalitarian social framework of an essentially military society, the constitutionalist traditions, and the lack of Western-type feudalism, predestined them for such a contribution, even though the alienation of society from its first (democratic) principles and the gradual collapse of national solidarity weakened the Principalities and exposed them to Turkish domination.¹⁷ In this quasi-providentialist scheme, the reception of—alien—feudal social structures was the root of inequality—the original sin—which was aggravated by Phanariot rule, the divine punishment, leading to the total alienation of the people from the boyars and the high culture they represented,¹⁸ threatening the nation with utter destruction. The fate of Poland served as an explicit example for Bălcescu to substantiate this divine warning.¹⁹ The seeming disparity between heroic traditions and the actual corruption was bridged by a uchronic mode of representation—i.e., the existence of the roots of democratic modernity, so far suppressed, but dwelling in the sphere of potentialities. Even if the medieval institutions were ruined, Romanian national character was a repository of this potential of regeneration—exactly the ahistoricity of peasant culture made it possible to defend their nationality in the past by sticking to their customs, i.e., refusing to change with a non-authentic history.²⁰ These national

16 Bălcescu (1998), pp. 10–12.

17 Bălcescu was far from being the only one to instrumentalize national antiquity for ideological-political purposes. In Ion C. Brătianu's *Bilanțul situațiunii* (1858) we can see the same republican inferences are used to legitimate a national state-building project based on the claim that before Tatar invasion a quasi-democratic society existed, which came to be destroyed by Phanariots, i.e., a class of foreigners.

18 “Spătarul Ioan Cantacuzino” in Bălcescu (1944), pp. 133–150.

19 “Despre starea socială a muncitorilor plugari în principatele Române în deosebite timpuri” in Bălcescu (1944), pp. 181–196.

20 “Cuvânt preliminaru despre izvoarele istoriei Românilor” in Bălcescu (1944), pp. 103–116.

character traits should and could still be recovered from the depth of the popular soul, thus becoming the foundation stones of a democratic republic. Thus, the archaic national institutions could be revalorized as fitting into an eminently European pattern—republican institutions, based on the military valor of the inhabitants, stemming from the Roman colonists.²¹ Small wonder, then, that historical research for Bălcescu had a strong “ethno-pedagogical” function—educating the people by confronting them with their past. This hermeneutic circularity of turning the people into its own latent self was prompted by the specific nature of historical evidence available for Bălcescu: as the process of alienation destroyed the other sources, the historian of Romanian antiquity had to turn to popular poetry. This was all the more possible, as the author readily subscribed to the vision (put forward by Jacob Grimm and Michelet) that poets were the first historians—thus awakening historical consciousness equaled making the people conscious of its own folklore tradition.

The most encompassing version of Bălcescu’s theory of history can be found in his *Mersul revoluției în istoria Românilor* [Course of the revolution in the History of the Romanians] (1850), which succeeded in integrating most of the elements discussed above into a meta-historical scheme, creating a narrative similar to the contemporary “national Romantic” historical models in East Central Europe, such as the Pole Joachim Lelewel,²² or the Hungarian Mihály Horváth, while being evidently influenced by the revolutionary *émigré*, dominantly Polish, subculture of Paris. The essay extended the narrative of suffering as a basis of salvation to formulate a specific Romanian national mission: namely, to be the vanguard of civilization.²³ In this quasi-Hegelian scheme of dialectical progress giving meaning to every instance of the national past, even negativity had its providential role: the loss of original equality starts the historical movement. Thus, Bălcescu resolves the possible contradiction (visible in his other essay, *Reforma socială*) between the implications of the stadial theory and his radical democratism, depicting serfdom as a higher level of social organization than primitive equality but also deploring the loss of archaic democracy and establishing a symbolic link between primordial innocence and the desirable future. In this dialectical vision, even the

21 See his “Puterea armată și artă militară dela întemeierea Principatului Valachiei până acum” and “Despre starea socială a muncitorilor” in Bălcescu (1944), pp. 29–78, 181–196.

22 See Skurnowicz (1981); and Andrzej Walicki, “From Sarmatism to Romanticism” in Walicki (1994), pp. 9–25.

23 Bălcescu, *Mersul revoluției în istoria Românilor* in Bălcescu (1944), p. 208.

Phanariots were fulfilling a providential mission in the sense that exactly the climax of corruption (reminding the reader of the “period of complete sinfulness” depicted in Fichte’s philosophy of history) activated the forces of regeneration. The “National party” raising against the oppressors (the parvenu *cio-coii* and the alienated bureaucrats) eventually came to incorporate the social into the national cause. Thus, the “course of revolution” in Romanian history means the gradual incorporation of the people into the nation, the fulfilment of emancipation and the progress towards liberty, unity (the process of nation-formation is defined in terms of the unification of Moldavia and Wallachia), and democracy.

As for the evolutionary paradigm, significantly, most of the constitutive elements were the same, but they came to be used for a somewhat different political project. While sharing the vision of continuous and one-directional progress, the proponents of this discourse laid stress on retaining institutional continuity with the past, bringing together the fruits of civilization with the normative national tradition represented by the traditional elite. The most coherent formulation of this position is by Mihail Kogălniceanu. On the surface, his historical program was quite similar to that of Bălcescu: he suggested collecting folk customs and contrasting the new history focusing on the evolution of the whole society to the history of princes. He was also subscribing to the myth of the ancient Romanian republics in Maramureș and Făgăraș,²⁴ i.e., rooting modern democracy in the institutions inherited from the Romans. However, some of his formulations indicated a certain distancing from the model of the “curve,” which fused the idea of heedless progress with the image of pre-modern egalitarianism, constituting the beginning and the end of national history. When he repeatedly stressed that civilization meant linking the present with the past, this link was imagined in a different way than in the revolutionary narrative.²⁵

In his early *Histoire de la Valachie* (1837),²⁶ he scanned the medieval and early modern history of Wallachia for models to emulate, but rather than eulogizing a primitive equality, he focused on the aspects of meritocracy, especially among the boyars. Instead of putting the responsibility for the col-

24 Kogălniceanu, *Slăvie, vecinătate și boieresc* in Kogălniceanu (1946), pp. 198–199. Significantly, the Dacians in Kogălniceanu’s vision are mentioned but only as a prehistory of the land: while Decebal is depicted as a positive figure, the author does not establish any genealogical relationship with the Dacian people.

25 Kogălniceanu, Introduction to *Letopiseștele*, in Kogălniceanu (1946), 671.

26 Kogălniceanu, *Histoire de la Valachie*, in Kogălniceanu (1946), 178ff.

lapse of the statehood on social differentiation, he changed the order of causality, stressing that the collapse of heroic virtue of the Romanians was due to the collapse of their statehood under external pressure. At the same time, he also subscribed to the idea that somehow the “character of the nation” remained uncorrupted, and this was due to the common people, who were “far from vices and cities, without luxury,” while the elite became infected by Greek mores. In this sense, his program of recovery was also conditioned by the return to the popular substrate of the society, the true repository of national character. At the same time, he put much more emphasis on the instrumentality of the national historical canon in this recovery—as he stressed, after the fall of Constantinople, the decadence of nationality and forgetting the past went hand in hand,²⁷ so the rekindling of nationality was also conditioned by revoking the past. This of course implied a much broader incorporating gesture. As the different social strata were equally part of this envisioned “past,” it became possible for Kogălniceanu to downplay the allegations of responsibility of the social elite in “corrupting” the cultural-political tradition. Furthermore, he also used this narrative to reject the attempts at importing “ready-made” institutions of modern democracy to the Danubian Principalities. As he pointed out, moderate and gradual reforms were needed and not hectic revolutions, as any innovation had to correspond to the national tradition, the “trunk of the peoples” [*tulpină popoarelor*], otherwise the new civilizational achievements could only be “exotic plants,” without any real impact.

Along these lines, one can observe the intertwining of identity discourses and the evolutionary perception of history in the mid 19th-century Romanian context as well. For instance, in his major work on the philosophy of history, entitled *Echilibrul între antiteze* [Equilibrium between antitheses 1859–1869], Ion Eliade-Rădulescu (1802–1872), a major ideologist of the liberal nationalist generation of 1848, sought to harmonize the principles of progress and conservation, the imitation of external models and the normativity of the local tradition in a grandiose scheme of tangential evolution towards perfection.²⁸ As he put it: “the Spirit moves only towards the better, or from the better towards the even better, from the perfect towards the more perfect;” while conservation implies “a pause, a rest in the course of progress.”²⁹ Significantly, this scheme of historicity was integrated into an even broader attempt of onto-

27 Kogălniceanu, Introduction to *Letopisețele*, in Kogălniceanu (1946), 673.

28 Eliade-Rădulescu (1916).

29 Eliade-Rădulescu (1916), vol. II, p. 154.

logical synthesis of spirit and material. He offered a theoretical argument linking nationhood with the category of existence (*"a fi"*)—in this sense, Eliade-Rădulescu can be credited with formulating the first Romanian "national ontology," which became a crucial intellectual enterprise in the interwar period.

In Eliade-Rădulescu's vision, "real progress" was conditioned by adherence to the national institutions that survived the vicissitudes of time. The history of Romanians is also unfolding in terms of a dialectic of spiritual motion towards the realization of a set of universal ideals and national institutions, which serve as repositories of accumulated traditions and practices. Not surprisingly, the concept of continuity is crucial for this vision: for Eliade-Rădulescu, even 1848 was not a break, but the refusal of externally imposed order (the "Organic Regulations" of 1831–1832), that is, reinstating historical continuity. Therefore, he considered the opposition of liberal and conservative political camps ephemeral, something that would eventually be resolved by a higher synthesis of the two fundamental principles. In a similar sense, he sought to position Romanian culture in between different external influences: the liberty of the Germans (i.e., a "new nation") and the traditionalism of the French and Slav "old" cultures. It is not surprising, then, that his model of successful synthesis was not in Europe, but the United States of America.

Eliade-Rădulescu's scheme of historical evolution had one more important feature, namely the fusion of the secular socio-economic pattern and a narrative of "sacred history." While Bălcescu used this modality to legitimize a revolutionary project, Eliade-Rădulescu was trying to find a balance between the revolutionary and evolutionary modalities, recycling the references to a national salvation story. He connected the narrative of Romanian democratic legal traditions originating in republican Rome with a curious theory of the roots of Christianity as part of Roman plebeian culture, rejecting the corrupted public morality of the *Principatus* and thus integrating Christianity into an envisioned egalitarian tradition. In line with his overall obsession with syntheses, although he did not claim that Christianity was merely a continuation of Roman popular culture, he stressed that it was a synthesis on a higher level: while ancient republicanism subjected the individual to the community (as he puts it, it was the "holocaust of the self"), thus salvation could only be collective—Christianity opened the road to individual salvation. Not surprisingly, this narrative was used to contrast Romanian Orthodoxy with Western Christianity, pointing out that in the former there was no "involvement of Caesar," whereas the latter was contaminated by politics and thus lost its essential trait. This created a possibility for formulating a discourse of Romanian "elect nationhood," using the classical *topoi* of this genre, such as the

“Moses of Romanians” (Radu Negru, the mythical founder of Wallachia, in the 14th century). All this is instrumentalized to underpin a theocratic-democratic vision, while rejecting radical liberalism. While the radicals rely on reason to make laws and also refer to foreign models, according to Eliade-Rădulescu, laws are to be “natural,” in “line with the Creator’s will,” linked to ancient customs.

Bălcescu’s and Eliade-Rădulescu’s references to a national eschatology were not as idiosyncratic as they might seem at first sight. As in practically every European Romantic tradition, this fusion was one of the crucial modalities of constructing a historical narrative. The eschatological modality of progress, appearing in the 1840s, and especially around the revolutionary movement of 1848 bears considerable similarity to the Polish pattern of national Messianism, which was extremely influential in the period. The elements of this discourse can be found in various writings, usually not creating a fully-fledged ideology of Romanians being “the Christ of the nations,” but using some of the *topoi* of this tradition. Thus, in Alecu Russo’s paradigmatic *Cântarea României*, the normative past of the nation is linked to a Messianic expectation of national and universal regeneration. The Moldavian politician, Vasile Mălinescu (1817–1866) described civilizational progress as a way to “salvation”;³⁰ Ion C. Brătianu referred to the God of Romanians;³¹ and in another work merged the argument for the perfectibility of humankind with an eschatological modality.³² In similar terms, the manifesto of 1848 composed by Mihail Kogălniceanu described suffering as the basis of the formation of (national) character and a way to liberation.³³

Even though on the topical level there were many attempts to fuse the eschatological and the national rhetoric, not everybody stated explicitly that the national and religious identifications were actually overlapping. Probably the most straightforward formulation of this is by the writer and traveler Dimitrie Bolintineanu (1819–1872), who asserted that religion and nationality were intimately linked, as patriotism was irrational—“sublime madness”—and thus structurally similar to religious feeling. All this was used to support his claim against cosmopolitanism and indirectly against the idea of multinational states: if patriotism is not rational, it is impossible to regulate it according to an accommodation of various conflicting interests, and thus it is clear that

30 Vasile Mălinescu, “Flamura Românilor” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, p. 242.

31 “Bilanțul situațiunii” in I. C. Brătianu (1921), p. 302.

32 “Republica română” in I. C. Brătianu (1921), p. 93ff.

33 “Dorințele partidei naționale în Moldova” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. I, p. 90.

more than one people cannot be unified in one state.³⁴ Interestingly enough, in Bolintineanu's understanding, this creative irrationality is not something naturally given, but itself subject to evolution: as he points out, the Romanians (especially the Vlachs of Macedonia, whom he visited in one of his travels) were utterly lacking patriotism, in contrast to Greeks and Hungarians, who were infatuated by another extreme, national egoism.

These observations lead us to the next crucial aspect of the interaction of the vision of progress and "national character" in the *pașoptist* world view: how the "people," the lower classes, could be linked to the vision of progress? As we could see above, the discourse of "customs" was in general rather ambiguous, as it sought to bring together the appreciation of archaism with the search for the agents of social and cultural progress in the community. Faced with a multiplicity of challenges and contexts, the Moldavian, Wallachian and Transylvanian liberal nationalists did not produce one canonical answer to this dilemma, but a number of divergent formulations. One can place these conceptions on a continuum ranging from the thinkers under the influence of Enlightenment ideas, considering the people rather passive building-materials of a modern nation, and deploring the low civilizational level of their rural compatriots, to those Romantics who depicted popular culture and folk customs as normative for the building of a national community.

The Transylvanian George Barițiu (1812–1893), for instance, severely criticized the cult of peasant simplicity, rejected archaic magic practices, and posited England as the best example of civilizational progress.³⁵ At the same time, he also asserted that folklore is the prime repository of the national character.³⁶ An in between modality was coined by those thinkers, such as Kogălniceanu, who identified the "People" with "the past"—thus defining it as the root of development and national individuality, but also distancing themselves from an uncritical cult of folk customs. The relegation of the "temporality" of the people to the past did not mean, however, the cult of pre-history. On the contrary, the idea of pre-historical archaism was rather a potential threat—as Eliade-Rădulescu pointed out, the "blacks" do not have traditions, they exist on a pre-historical civilizational level from where it is practically impossible to reach modernity. It was therefore crucial to prove that the Romanian peasants were not barbarians—and the topology of organic autarchy and even of moral

³⁴ Bolintineanu (1915), (written in 1858).

³⁵ Barițiu, "Cultură" in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. I, pp. 221–230. On Barițiu's political and cultural ideas, see the contribution by Kinga Sata in this volume.

³⁶ Barițiu (1962), p. 52.

superiority over Western societies could be the result of such an effort of self-legitimization. In Eliade-Rădulescu's writings, we come across peasants living an idyllic life, contrasted with the misery of English proletarians.

As seen above, the popular customs became crucial in discussions on the historical continuity of institutions. Building on the Latinist historical vision of the Transylvanian school, Eliade-Rădulescu was one of the first to turn the narrative of the ancestors of the Romanians retreating to the mountains and keeping their national traditions in the storm of the *Völkerwanderung* in this direction. In this sense, folklore could be identified with collective memory reaching back to the Roman times, and this confirmed Eliade-Rădulescu's overall argument about the survival of republican institutions until the present.

The cult of national antiquity located in folklore was obviously a compensatory mechanism of intellectuals who had to face the challenge of being accused of lacking a proper historical tradition in the absence of historiographical evidence. In a letter by Dimitrie Brătianu, the brother of Ion C. Brătianu, to Jules Michelet,³⁷ we find a clear illustration of this: Brătianu seeks to respond to the accusation of the Romanians' lack of history, pointing out that this is just because history is understood in terms of Western historiographical production, which of course neglected the past of the peoples at the eastern margins of Europe. The envisioned Roman-Romanian continuity puts the nation into its proper context: the love of liberty, attested by brigands having special social consciousness, the existence of republics in the 12th century, and the simplicity of the manners of peasants are evoked to prove this continuity in the absence of written sources. In his attempt to support his argument, Brătianu reaches a hypertrophic version of archaism: defining the character of the Romanian people as living antiquity *per se*, fusing the "sobriety of Sparta" with the "eloquence of Athens," featuring "heroic chants," but also "biblical women," and marked by a heroic military tradition.

Similarly, in Alecu Russo's formulation, folklore was a historical archive, where the most original layer was linked to the memory of antiquity.³⁸ Skillfully merging the vision of one-directional progress with the genealogical argument, Russo suggested that Virgil's *Georgicon* was a perfect source for understanding the mores of the contemporary Romanians. Classical antiquity was thus linked to authenticity, the Virgilian tradition becoming integrated

37 Bucur (1982), p. 123.

38 Alecu Russo, "Poezia populară" in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, p. 340.

into the canon of Romanianness. The “classicism” of this construction of identity did not imply, however, a program of imitating the ancient cultural models: thus Russo had no qualms about defining the popular ballad, *Miorița*, which did not have any classical reference, as the purest expression of Romanian national character.

The same claims can be found, against the background of an even more poignant Romantic aesthetic setting, in the essay by the most important Romanian Romantic poet, Vasile Alecsandri (1819?–1890), entitled “The Romanians and their Poetry.”³⁹ Moving towards self-exoticizing, Alecsandri stressed the patriarchal customs, fantastic beliefs, and proverbs of the people, describing them as “documents” for the way of thinking of the nation. Analyzing popular poetry, he identified two key motifs of the national soul: fervent love and the life of the outlaws [*haiduci*]. All this had a strong impact on the canonization of Romanian folklore. Alecsandri was the editor of the normative collection of Romanian folk poetry (*Balade adunate și îndreptate*, 1852–53), and this paradigm determined the way the Romanian tradition was “marketed” abroad in the second half of the 19th century—nation-building and cultural canonization could thus go hand in hand with archaism. In a book by the future professor of pedagogy and aesthetics, Ioan Crăciunescu (1845–1909), published in Paris, references to Herder support the argument according to which poetry was laid at the core of every archaic civilization, and especially popular poetry was the mirror of national soul.⁴⁰ The Romanian predisposition towards poetry thus proved for him that this nation still existed in a state of nature.

This vision of uncorrupted natural harmony (perhaps accentuated for “foreign consumption”) was not the only modality of understanding the relationship of modernity and antiquity. Already in Russo’s text from 1851 we can find the assertion that there was an imminent need to canonize the folk culture, as the authentic culture was disappearing.⁴¹ This indicates that no matter how powerful one might have considered the popular culture to be, there was a common element in most of these formulations of national character in terms of the popular tradition: namely the “double-bind” of defining the folklore as a source of knowledge, but also as something to be

39 Vasile Alecsandri “Românii și poezia lor” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. I, pp. 169–189.

40 Crăciunescu (1874).

41 Alecu Russo, “Studie moldovană” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, especially pp. 348–360.

cultivated and canonized, and the profound ambiguity of an evolutionary vision of civil society and a critical modality deploring modernity for losing its spiritual grasp on the people (an “emotional past” contrasted to “rational present,” marked by alienation, and lack of coherence). This is expressed succinctly by Alecu Russo: “as much as we gain in progress, we lose in private relations.”

Finally, from the perspective of the later development of the Romanian discourse of identity, one has to pose the question to what extent national archaism and the Romantic discourse of national character localized authenticity in the *ethnos*. As one could see in the case of Bălcescu, ethnicity was part of the historical narrative, most visibly in the case of anti-Phanariotism, describing the influx of Greeks as the agents of decomposition. There is a certain parallelism between this meta-historical construction and the Transylvanian version of identity-discourse emerging in 1848, most memorably in the famous speech of Simion Barnuțiu held in Blaj, which described the incursion of Hungarians to Transylvania as the root of all evils.⁴²

At the same time, it would be a mistake to overstate the importance of ethnicity in the *pașoptist* discourses. It is rather indicative that in Ion C. Brătianu's *Memoriu* (1859), which is an important profession of faith of the state-building political group, the merchants and artisans are defined as the basis of patriotism, even if not all of them are ethnically Romanian, while the peasants are described as the “raw material” of nation building rather than its normative basis. Similarly, Eliade-Rădulescu's theory of “*ciocoism*” (i.e., of the destructive and egoist social class infiltrating the social body of the Romanians, the “plague and cholera of society”) is ultimately not ethnicized, but denotes a mentality, and he stressed that the son of an honest citizen can become a *ciocoi*, and the other way round as well. At the same time, at least metaphorically, the mark of foreignness is conferred on them, described as having a “great dose of gypsiness.” In contrast to the liberal consensus of the 1840–50s, however, Eliade-Rădulescu categorically excluded the Jews from the body of the Romanian nation on a religious basis, stating that only Orthodox Christians could be Romanians.⁴³

42 Barnuțiu (1909).

43 Eliade-Rădulescu (1916).

THE CHALLENGE OF *JUNIMISM*

Already in the 1850s the transformation of the Romantic discourse of civilization reached another stage, as an increasing number of critiques raised their voice against the inauthentic reception of foreign models in the name of a local pattern of civilization. A good example is the pedagogue Gheorghe Melidon's (1831–1897) text from 1855, which still subscribed to the normative concept of civilization, but pointed out the superficial nature of reception, stressing that the lower classes were utterly ignorant and the higher ones were having civility only on the surface. Melidon thus connected the vision of gradual progress to the critique of foreign influence [*străinism*], stressing that the reception of external models needed to follow the internal growth of civilization.⁴⁴

From the 1860s onwards, this Romantic/liberal nationalist framework of identity was challenged by a new cultural-political discourse, *Junimism*.⁴⁵ The *Junimist* critique of *pașoptism* meant the dissolution of the fusion of progress, local traditions, external models and the “quasi-theological” vision of historical development, although it was much less obvious how the proposed new identity-discourse would look like. As we could already see, although the *Junimists* tended to counter-identify themselves to the liberal nationalist advocates of cultural import, the criticism of imported forms was far from being unprecedented. For instance, in the writings of Kogălniceanu, who both politically and culturally tried to balance between liberalism and conservatism, we find a number of pejorative remarks about both “romanomania” and “xenomania.” In the introduction to the journal *Dacia Literară*, he expressed his criticism of the restless desire of imitation and got close to rejecting translation literature altogether as a source of cultural emancipation.⁴⁶

All these preoccupations became encapsulated into a more systematic framework of cultural and political criticism in the *Junimist* intellectual tradition originating in Iași. The immediate context of their criticism concerned the language codification, where they confronted the “exaggerations” of the “Latinist” school trying to restore the morphological connections between modern Romanian and classical Latin, and argued for a more organic vision

44 Gheorghe Melidon, “Despre învățătură” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II, pp. 245–248.

45 On *Junimism*, see Zub (1976), Ornea, (1978), Alexandrescu (1989) and Drace-Francis (2006).

46 “Introducere” in Kogălniceanu (1974), pp. 223.

of language and society. While the *Junimist* intellectuals put forward various projects in literature, historiography, and eventually even politics, at the root of their self-positioning, we can find a common denominator of a sweeping critical attitude rather than any commonly shared set of values or program of action.

One can, nevertheless, extricate some more general claims about the nature and preferred direction of the Romanian national project that characterized most of the *Junimists*. On the whole, they asserted that the rise of modern lifestyles and institutions triggered the dissolution of the normative national character. They based their claim on the observation that the new social layer, which represented modern values, was increasingly alienated from the peasantry and thus the—perhaps unintended—consequence of “progress” was the collapse of common identity. The main ideologist of the *Junimist* movement, Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917)—in his programmatic essay, “*În contra direcției de astăzi în cultura română*” [Against the current direction of Romanian culture]—connected this “corruption” to the negative impact of cultural imitation. He stressed that the youngsters going to the West were not prepared for this experience and appropriated only the Western forms without knowing the historical preconditions. The ensuing proliferation of forms without substances (“*forme fără fond*”) were not without any social use, but became explicitly destructive. It led to the growth of the gap between the upper class and the people, culminating in the formation of an entirely alienated new elite. In contrast, the peasantry continues to feature the national tradition, it is the only “real class,” but it loses contact with the social and political elite.

Even if it did not pose a coherent narrative, the *Junimist* vision of the vicissitudes of Romanian development could be considered a new discourse of identity. Its protagonists stressed the epistemological break with Romantic ideologies and set forth a positivist theoretical framework. As the paradigmatic scientific approach of the positivists was that of biology, the Romanian followers of this trend also stressed the naturalist and organicist theories in the social sciences. This had a considerable impact on the way nation became imagined, putting increasing emphasis on the “natural” ingredients of the community, bringing together the national character with biological determinants. This was not a novelty of course: as the *pașoptist* Costache Negruzzi (1808–1868) characteristically formulated, the main factors of civilization were the nature of the soil and the character of its inhabitants.⁴⁷ What was

47 Costache Negruzzi, “Cântece populare” in Cornea and Zamfir (1968), vol. II. pp. 254.

nevertheless new was the broader framework narrating civilization under the aegis of organic evolutionism—progress from this perspective is the gradual unfolding of inherent potentialities catalyzed by the natural environment. As a result, the idea of civilizational jumps caused by external instances became less and less acceptable. As one of the leading *Junimist* intellectuals, Vasile Pogor (1833–1906), stressed in his review of Thomas Buckle,⁴⁸ progress was not related to the initiative of government but was due mainly to climatic factors. He subscribed to the theory that the warmer land is usually marked by despotism due to the humors of its inhabitants. This understanding of “civilization” rooted in nature led to the rather sharp distinction between the bio-social basis of civilization on the one hand and religion, culture and mentality being considered more epiphenomenal on the other. Pogor’s speculation had another important implication, namely the separation of material, intellectual and moral progress. It was possible to imagine a society with a high level of material civilization but still lagging behind in cultural and ethical terms. This meant a break with the earlier understanding of cumulative growth of civilization inherited from the Late Enlightenment, although it was obviously not that far from the perspective of Rousseau or even Diderot. In contrast to the Rousseauian vision, however, this contrast did not shift into a praise of pre-modernity or the *bon sauvage*, but served as a critical perspective to judge societies which reached a certain level of socio-economic modernity without an overall mental adaptation to the Western patterns.

While Pogor’s text remained on the meta-level, this analytical framework was turned to the Romanian society in a number of writings of the protagonists of *Junimea*. For instance, the writer and politician, Theodor Rosetti (1837–1932), in his “On the direction of our progress”⁴⁹ stressed that changes on the surface notwithstanding, Romanian society was still at a primitive stage. The expected modernization was supposed to move it out from this primitivism, not only in a socio-economic but also in a mental sense. In order to be successful, however, the new structures were supposed to be organically linked to the existing traditions and cultural patterns, no matter how antiquated they might have been. Thus the question of coherence became a crucial one—progress should link present and past, the individual and the state, the particular and the universal.

48 Vasile Pogor, “H. T. Buckle – Istoria civilizațiunii în Englitera” in Lovinescu (1942), pp. 98–115.

49 Theodor Rosetti, “Despre direcțiunea progresului nostru” in Lovinescu (1942), pp. 126–162.

From this perspective, the previous decades, which were considered to be a success story by the liberal nationalists, meant a period of disintegration—the loss of continuity with the past and the emergence of individuals gradually breaking away from their community and thus losing moral control. This became clear from the growing gap on the one hand between the elite and the masses—living different lifestyles, having very different preferences, etc.; on the other hand between the old generation and the new one breaking with the past. For Rosetti, this differentiation entailed the antipode of real progress, resulting in veritable chaos and the dissolution of social bonds. It is important to stress, however, that the imperative of the continuity with the past did not imply the idealization of the past as a regressive utopia: the *Junimists* were vocal in rejecting a nostalgic understanding of pre-modern structures, thus, for instance, for Titu Maiorescu progress entailed the disappearance of feudal privileges.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, “national tradition” became a crucial concept—linking the normative conception of the national essence to the project of modernization. In order to grasp this “national essence” the *Junimists* advocated the return to the sources on previous stages of national history, studying the nature of the Romanian people in its various manifestations, such as folk art, poetry and customs. As Rosetti stressed, the aim was to create “national sciences”—developing a truly Romanian history and language, keeping in line with the “vital core of our race.” Authenticity was sanctioned by “history’s judgment”—which, similar to nature, tended to eliminate “hybrid forms.”

This is exactly the locus of the “ethnic” in the *Junimist* discourse. To some extent this can be considered paradoxical, as the program of the movement was exactly to reject the “patriotard” rhetoric of the liberal nationalist generation and approach the national community critically. At the same time, the organicist argument was activating the potentials of an ethnicist discourse—contrasting the bearers of the tradition (who could be defined as the “true Romanians”) with those who became alienated from it (by adopting foreign mores). This, however, did not necessarily go together with an identification of alienation with the presence of ethnic aliens—as a matter of fact, some of the leading *Junimists*, such as Titu Maiorescu and Petre Carp, were among the most moderate in the debate on the emancipation of the Jews, where many representatives of the political elite expressed their fears that the growth of the number of Jewish citizens would put the Romanian state into danger and thus

⁵⁰ Titu Maiorescu, “Idei dintr’un ciclu de ‘Prelecțiuni populare’” in Lovinescu (1942), p. 90ff.

rejected a more liberal procedure of according citizenship demanded by the Western powers.

Thus, one can conclude that, often against the intentions of the speakers themselves, the positivist intellectual framework, subscribed to by the *Junimists*, had a strong drive towards the ethnicization of politics. This can be seen from the intellectual itinerary of the philosopher from Iași, Vasile Conta (1845–1882), whose *oeuvre* was usually taken to be the first materialist philosophical system stemming from Romanian soil and thus hailed by the communist historians of philosophy. Deeply influenced by the contemporary trends of positivism and publishing his main works in the main organ of *Junimism*, *Convorbiri literare*, Conta stressed in his works the fictitious nature of free will, arguing from the perspective of material determinism. While most of his speculations were about natural philosophy, he also sought to create a new organon of social sciences. Most of all, he stressed the importance of statistics—which was able to document the working of vast uncontrollable forces which the individuals could not grasp from their limited perspective.

Drawing on Vico's vision of historical phases, but mainly on the works of Comte and Buckle, Conta sought to arrange the flux of these supra-personal processes according to a scheme of historical pulsation—which he put forward as a “theory of universal undulation.”⁵¹ This materialistic vision had a powerful impact on his understanding of nationhood as well. As he formulated, nations were products of their natural medium, and national history was the function of the material setting determining the life conditions of the nation. It is significant that this perspective could have rather divergent political implications. In his youth, traveling to Belgium and France, Conta earned the reputation of being a radical left-winger, whose philosophical materialism and implied atheism was supposed to square with his political radicalism. As a matter of fact, his radicalism went beyond the general understanding of the radical democratic left in Romanian politics—as he repeatedly asserted that democracy as a form of government was based on the fiction of free will, whereas the future state was to be based on the idea of determination. Furthermore, his involvement in Romanian politics in the late 1870s makes this picture even more complicated.

Conta emerged as one of the most vocal critiques of the project for Jewish emancipation, which was part of the package “imposed” on Romania by the Berlin conference of 1878. He contributed to the ensuing debate with a series

51 Conta (1877).

of pamphlets, which stressed the pernicious nature of the influx of Jews and advocated a policy of legal discrimination.⁵² By doing so, he adopted most of the common places of the emerging—mostly Central European—anti-Semitic discourse to the specific Romanian context. The theoretical basis of his rejection of immigration was a naturalistic understanding of nationhood. As he repeatedly stressed, all forms of social organization, namely families, peoples and states, were based on the community of blood. This community secures similar reactions, guaranteeing a social cohesion, which is the key to progress. Therefore the condition of admitting foreigners for him was biological assimilation—only the complete melting of the specific character of the foreigner into the Romanian biological substrate could secure socio-cultural cohesion.

The danger posed by the Jews according to Conta was exactly their unwillingness to dissolve their character. Even if they accepted on the surface the lifestyle of the majority, they sought to preserve their own social and political organization and thus constituted an alien body and a seed of corruption. This vision was further radicalized in his second major speech held in the Parliament on the “Jewish question,” which shifted the emphasis from the image of the Jews stubbornly resisting assimilation to that of expansive Judaism, the conscious subversive activity of Jewish conspirators to subvert the Romanian state and eventually colonize the territory—thus updating his narrative with the most recent developments of European anti-Semitic political discourse. As Conta stressed, the conspirators used the framework of constitutional liberties for destruction, while enjoying a monopoly of press, the support of their kinsfolk under the aegis of Jewish internationalism masked as international concern for civil rights. The climax of this vision is, predictably, an apocalyptic picture of Romania as a potential new Israel, a new nation-state of the Jews eventually purged of its autochthonous population.

While his intellectual relationship to *Junimism* is rather complicated, the political project of Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889), the most eminent Romanian poet of the 19th century, can also be placed in the context sketched above. Eminescu’s sociological insights crystallized around a single dichotomy: the conflict between the “positive classes” and the “superimposed strata,” that is, the autochthonous and the alien. Back in 1820, “two independent classes existed, one a peasant class, originating from drafted soldiers, and the other, a city-dweller class. [...] The history of the last fifty years is called ‘national regeneration’ by many, but it could be better called the history

52 Conta (1899).

of the eradication of the yeomanry and the guildsmen [*răzeșilor și breslașilor*].”⁵³ The reformation of the political establishment created an “unhealthy stirring” and a craving for positions “based not on labor but on privileges.” This “flocking to the gates of privilege”⁵⁴ carried the members of the positive classes along as well, leaving an economic void behind, which could only be filled up with alien elements—pre-eminently with Jews. “Where are these positive classes in our country? The historical aristocracy—it must be historical to be of any importance—almost disappeared, a positive middle class does not exist at all, the voids are filled up with strangers, the peasant class is too uncultivated, and although it is the only positive class, nobody understands it, or represents it.”⁵⁵ Thus the “positive classes” are the natives, while the “super-imposed strata” are the “aliens” and the “alienated,” the importers of Western structures and those who flocked into the country in search of economic opportunities. The focus of these speculations is obviously the problem of the correspondence between structures and institutions, and the task of the community is to adapt to the march of history. If the national genius fails to show the way to the elite (“the genius of our Romanian nation is a book with seven seals for the generation in power”)⁵⁶ the agents of history will become aliens, and history will become the process of alienation.

Eminescu’s utopianism⁵⁷ is obviously the counterpart to his sociological vision of “regressive progress.” The vegetative eschatology presented in his story *Cezara*, and the vision of an organic agrarian community both give us a normative canon that can be played off against the deplorable present of disintegration: a regulative idea of progress, the “real aim of history” as reintegration. In its most radical expression, this utopianism, the insular eternity of Euthanasius, might transcend history to crystallize into the vegetative creativity of the Romantic Ego, but as a regulative idea it coexists perfectly with a linear-historicist vision of “real progress,” “which is the natural link between past and future.”⁵⁸ This means that the normative horizons of politics contain acts of “conservation here, adding up something there,” which makes it understandable why Eminescu praised England as a model of development. No matter where the Romantic Ego might be wandering, the horizons of the

53 Eminescu (1931), p. 62.

54 Eminescu (1931), p. 64.

55 Eminescu (1931), p. 70.

56 Eminescu (1931), p. 274.

57 Sorin Antohi, “Utopia lui Eminescu” in Antohi (1994), pp. 104–35.

58 Eminescu (1931), p. 125.

problem he struggles with are drawn according to the dichotomy between “importation and autochthonism.” The real question is the connection between past and future: “Whether an oak tree, broken at its roots and planted artificially in a luxurious garden, has a future?”⁵⁹ Myths of regression, craving for a time when “there was neither today, nor tomorrow, nor yesterday,” do not change the perspective of organic continuity and institutional innovation: “first you have to be an industrial nation, and then you can have the laws and institutions of an industrial nation.”⁶⁰

RENEGOTIATING THE ROMANTIC PARADIGM: THE ETHNICIZATION OF NATIONAL HISTORY

The case of Bogdan P. Hașdeu (1838–1907) is in many ways parallel to that of Eminescu. While Eminescu represented a potential development inherent in the *Junimist* critique of liberal nationalism, Hașdeu in political and cultural terms continued the Romantic-liberal heritage but also turned it into a more directly ethnicist direction.⁶¹ Furthermore, similar to Eminescu, his *oeuvre* also served as a crucial source of inspiration of the interwar nationalists.

Hașdeu’s case is also important as it witnesses the intertwining of the issue of temporality with the question of national character. It thus helps us understand how the political projects, the historical narratives and the normative discourse of the “national self” mutually conditioned each other. In this sense, the broader intellectual context of his work is the radical transformation of nationalism and liberalism as ideological frameworks of Romanian political thinking. This context makes it understandable why the reconstruction of the sometimes rather hilarious speculations on ethnogenesis, national archaism and the topology of uniqueness, which were often described as irrelevant by-products of the otherwise unilinear drive towards professionalization of historical sciences, is more than an idle scholarly pastime. The reformulation of the place of the *ethnos* in historical time was crucial in undermining the liberal political discourse, which was dominating Romanian political culture in the mid 19th century.

The background of Hașdeu’s political ideas was the new state-framework which had emerged in the wake of the union of Wallachia and Moldavia in

59 Eminescu (1931), p. 96.

60 Eminescu (1931), pp. 111–12.

61 The best intellectual biography on him to date is Pecican (2004).

1859, and the ensuing political and cultural struggles within the elite. Hașdeu was a vocal representative of the camp arguing that the consolidation of the new state required the radical extension of political rights—as he formulated in argument with C. A. Rosetti (1816–1885), a former radical democrat who became part of the establishment after 1859, only universal suffrage could guarantee the formation of a new national community—turning the people into “citizens” and overpowering the ethnically alien urban population. Making this counter-position, Hașdeu could describe his conservative opponents as the agents of autocracy,⁶² and also connect rhetorically the camp of political conservatism with serving the interest of “the aliens.” This meant a direct clash with the proponents of more moderate reforms, and Hașdeu sought especially to destroy Titu Maiorescu, the leading *Junimist* intellectual, by declaring that he “personifies all that is the most anti-national in a sinful union with all what is the most anti-democratic.”⁶³ At first glance, the main lines of his identity-discourse can be compared to the phenomenon memorably described by Isaiah Berlin as “populism,”⁶⁴ that is, having a strong thrust against state-nationalism and focusing more on the creative potentials of the folk, which is held to be suppressed or marginalized from the perspective of “official nationalism.”

His discourse of nationhood was rooted in a new methodological configuration of history and its auxiliary disciplines. The intellectual sources of his theories show a remarkable variety. From the 18th-century European cultural heritage, he had been referring to Vico, Montesquieu, and Herder as his main sources. Working out his theory of evolution, he was an ardent follower of Hegel and Comte. He also made ample references to Max Müller’s linguistic works and he borrowed the concept of *pathologie sociale* from Paul Lilienfeld’s *Sozialwissenschaft der Zukunft*. Significantly, while the usual direction of intellectual transfer was East–West, Hașdeu also pioneered the adoption of scientific output coming from East Central Europe. This is most visible in his references to Slavic studies, where he was repeatedly evoking the ideas of Josef Dobrovský, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, Franz von Miklosich, Jernej Kopitar, alongside the ‘Westerners,’ Robert Rösler and Louis Léger.⁶⁵ He was

62 See, e.g., “Interesele României” in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, pp. 244–47.

63 “Dl. Titus Livius Maiorescu” in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 297.

64 Berlin (2000), pp. 168–242.

65 See, for instance, his discussion of the Polish-Bulgarian ethno-cultural links in the text “Stat și substrat” in Hașdeu (2001), pp. 7–43.

also the founder of the journal *Viitorul*, edited together with the Bulgarian *émigré* Georgi Rakovski.

Using various intellectual sources ranging from philosophy to folklore, he sought to reshape historical narratives in view of ethnography and linguistics, the paradigmatic “national sciences” fitting into the trend of general democratization. The study of languages for Hașdeu is a “popular science” marked by egalitarian spirit, in contrast to the elite-centered forms of cultural analysis,⁶⁶ focusing on the “dead languages of the Church.” By turning to the popular culture and the national language one can create a basis for all the modern scientific projects: consequently, Hașdeu praises Vico for being the first one to assert that “every people has its own encyclopedia, geography, cosmography, astronomy, etc.” all contained in the depths of its vernacular language. Along these lines, he defines folklore not as the collection of popular texts or objects, but representing the “entire present and past life of a people, its material and moral life in its gradual unfolding.”

These claims are buttressed by a new psychology and epistemology of popular cultural creation. Going against Moses Gaster’s philological theory of popular culture as the manifestation of *gesunkene Kulturgute*, fairy tales for Hașdeu are not to be discarded as unreal, as they have the reality of the dream, that is, an alternative reality—from which it is possible to discover “what cannot be seen or known.” In this sense, tales are rooted in universal patterns of our mind, they are the same everywhere as they do not have temporal and local origins—they only represent the mindset of the primitive man. In Hașdeu’s thinking, this universalistic trait of popular culture is not incompatible with an assertion, once again with reference to Vico, of cultural specificity inherent in folk culture: “the peasant contains in his mind and soul all the elements that are to flourish in culture.”⁶⁷ Hașdeu contrasted this to the alleged “national literature” which he considered more of a shallow imitation of the Western models.

All this is encapsulated by a sweeping image of the philosophy of history, stressing the correlation of the individual and the species⁶⁸ and arguing for an organicist vision of historical ages corresponding to the stages of human life. The organic metaphors are crucial to his construction of Romanian history as

66 “Dicționare și dicționare” in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 23.

67 “Mișcarea literelor în Eși” in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 59.

68 See especially “Noi în 1892” in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, pp. 125–133; he uses the concept of “philosophy of history” also in his “Caracterul naționalității române ca baza legislațiunei sale.”

well: the rebirth [*Renăștere*] of the nation follows its “agony,” where the alien rulers play the role of lethal illness (the Phanariots are described as “filoxera”), while the “New Romania” to be built has to go through the phases of the formation of human character—from the egoism of childhood through the imitation of the older (French culture) towards mature self-assertion. Already in an article from 1859, he gives a philosophical overview of the theories of evolution in history,⁶⁹ suggesting with explicit reference to Hegel that progress is a matter of consciousness, being rooted in reflection. In this sense the Occident is a privileged part of the world; in contrast to Indian or Chinese philosophy the open-ended process of history created hope in change for the better and made people much more active. Participating in this progress is what constitutes our human essence, while acting against progress makes us lose our humanity. At the same time, this evolutionary framework is brought together with a certain relativism. “Nations are going ahead only on the road of a principle”: the evolutionary vision is thus fused with the assertion of a specific “matrix” of the community which is supposed to unfold. He once again refers to Vico to stress that, while humankind in general is the subject of evolution, every culture has its own rhythm and it is impossible to impose the itinerary of one culture on another by force, and in this sense progress is explicitly conditioned by ethno-cultural purity.⁷⁰

This vision of nationhood, based on the imperative that the real love of humankind implied promoting one’s own ethnic community (“*propria sa gente*”), thus tried to bring together the Vicoian-Herderian and the Hegelian construction—harmonizing particularism with universal progress. In the 1870s, however, Hașdeu increasingly moved away from his earlier vision of the balance between national and universal and came to imagine these two normativities as mutually exclusive. In his opinion, recent history, especially the French–German war, taught that one had to choose between the national loyalty and the humankind, and thus the ultimate loyalty had to be that of being Romanian.

This meta-historical framework is used for the more detailed analyses of Romanian historical development as well. The basic counter-position of Hașdeu was fairly similar to that of Eminescu: the contrast of corrupted present and heroic past.⁷¹ Of course, the problem was that the historical past of the Danubian Principalities as transmitted by the traditional sources could hardly

69 “Mandatele imperative-n privirea propășirei,” in Hașdeu (2001), p. 102.

70 “Caracterul naționalității române ca baza legislațiunei sale” in Hașdeu (2001), p. 173.

71 See, for instance, “Ziarele în România” in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, pp. 97–101.

be considered normative *en bloc*, as it contained many aspects which were politically unacceptable for Hașdeu. His discursive strategy was to try to purge the tradition from these elements, stressing that Phanariotism and feudalism were interconnected and equally alien to the soul of the people—so even if there were feudal institutions these were not part of the tradition *per se*. The result of this redefinition of tradition is the vision of the Romanian past as an “alternative antiquity” existing more in potentiality than in actuality.

His model, merging ethnicization and democratization in projecting a normative tradition, is also crucial for his reconstruction (or deconstruction) of more recent history: for instance, in his “Discourse on Tudor Vladimirescu” he describes the conflict as ethnic—contrasting the ethnic Romanians with the “locusts.” Ethnicity thus serves as the *mytho-moteur* in Hașdeu’s philosophy of history.⁷² This does not mean, however, that his understanding was completely monolithic. He was, from the very beginning, postulating that ethnic fusion was part of the formation of Romanian nation, but for some time, while he did not subscribe fully to the Latinist narrative of the Transylvanian school, he emphatically rejected the idea of the Latinization of Dacians.⁷³ Later on, he became more open to the vision focusing on the Dacians and turning towards an autochthonist narrative of ethnogenesis. He developed a rather complex theory of “strata” and “substrata,” constituting the ethnic setup of a community: “every ethnîe [*gînte*] is composed of ‘geological terrains’”—that is, different layers representing different historical epochs and their relationship making up the substance of a nation. His most elaborate ethno-genetic narrative started from the “Pelasg substrate” which was supposed to bring together Thracians and Greeks. This framework also established a connection between the Romanians and the Albanians—Hașdeu repeatedly stressed that the Albanians were also Dacians—and their medieval state was a “beautiful neo-Dacian kingdom.” The Romanian ethnîe in this vision is the result of the interplay of this “Pelasg substrate” with the Latin stratum, leading to a new configuration. This means that while he considered that the existence of a given substrate could guarantee some sort of ethnic continuity, Hașdeu accepted that the “logic” of assimilation was also part of history. He stressed, however, that Latins were generally hard to assimilate.

Based on the common ethnic and cultural background, he was at some point toying with the idea of a Balkan confederation—but emphatically re-

72 “Stat și substrat” in Hașdeu (2001), pp. 7–43.

73 “Anglia în Ardeal” in Hașdeu (2001), p. 291.

jected the revolutionary Mazzinian version and stressed instead Balkan orthodoxy as a separate tradition.⁷⁴ In general, however, he explicitly rejected federalism as the main principle of state organization—stressing national individuality as the core of any state-building project and thus clearly transgressing Berlin's definition of "populism" as the assertion of ethnicity in contrast to statehood.⁷⁵ Along these lines, his main concern was to create a Pan-Romanian confederation on the basis of his claim that "all Romanians are brothers," thus "re-conquering" Bukovina and Transylvania. Conspicuously, the neighbors of the Romanians are generally described as barbarians: the Hungarians are an Asiatic and uncultivated race, whose existence was preserved only due to Romanian cultural influence. He also raises an issue that was to become one of the common themes of *fin-de-siècle* Romanian ethnic nationalism, stressing the process of Jewish assimilation in Hungary as a sign of internal corruption. He also compares the Romanians favorably to the Hungarians in the sense of independent statehood, stressing that the Hungarians do not even exist as a nation as they do not have a state of their own.⁷⁶

Along these lines, Hașdeu repeatedly asserted the importance of "Patriotism" as a central virtue but "redescribed" it in an "ethno-national" sense as being aimed at "national greatness and not the greatness of the country."⁷⁷ This does not mean, however, a conceptual separation of statehood and nationhood—on the contrary, Hașdeu's understanding of nationality was based on the claim that a nation can live only as an organic part of a nation-state.⁷⁸

While he also analyzed the external pressures on the Romanian nation, he became more and more fixated on the "internal aliens." The real danger was coming from inside—the rejection of the national imperative, the "*gangrena*" of cosmopolitanism.⁷⁹ For him, cosmopolitanism⁸⁰ was not only a misunderstanding of the logic of history, but an active force of dissolution—a "refined egoism." While Hașdeu started as a liberal politician, it is along this line of

74 "Papa de la Neva" in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, pp. 146–158.

75 "Facultatea de Medicină" in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 238.

76 "Noi și voi" in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, pp. 137–139.

77 "Patriotism și neîncredere" in Hașdeu (2001), p. 278.

78 "Noi și voi" in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, pp. 134–145.

79 "Discursul privind președinția societăți Românișmul" in Hașdeu (2001), pp. 62–67.

80 In other context, see also his "Cosmopolitanism și naționalism" in Hașdeu (2001), pp. 68–

thought that he came to assert that liberalism was a “fake ideology.”⁸¹ This also signaled a break with the traditional framework of politics: Hașdeu stressed that both sides meant the same thing and thus started to search for new patterns of ideological mobilization. One such reference was the use of a generational rhetoric: “the youth [*junimea*] is incapable of living in lies.”⁸²

In general, he came to describe the “cult of foreign” as the root of all evils in the country, adding that this aping was the sin of the elite, who were anyhow not ethnic Romanians. This fit into his general thrust to ethnicize social conflict,⁸³ stressing that the boyars were almost exclusively of foreign origins, while the ethnic Romanians were the oppressed.⁸⁴ Writing about the travelers on board a steamship, he did not fail to remark that “few real descendents from the colony of Trajan possess the means to allow themselves such an expense,” while elsewhere he contrasted the public of salons and the “Romanian speakers.” The issue of the Jews also appears in this context: Hașdeu published as early as 1865 a series of pamphlets on the “Jewish question” and he became increasingly preoccupied with the issue: going as far as declaring that “our political religion is to combat Judaism”⁸⁵ and warning of the danger of Romania “becoming Palestine.”⁸⁶ It is important to stress, however, that as the ethnic discourse in general is connected to the idea of “democratization,” Hașdeu also linked his anti-Semitic claims at least rhetorically to the issue of the emancipation of the Romanian common folk, rather than to the protection of the traditional elite.

All these considerations play a decisive role in Hașdeu’s attempt to reshape the discourse on national character. This does not mean a complete break with the liberal nationalist tradition—he subscribed to the idea that the customs of Romanians were like that of the ancient Romans. But when developing more coherent narratives of identity in the late 1860s, he tried to buttress his political agenda with a normative image of Romanianness accentuating “popular democratic” character traits. Not surprisingly, the concept of character had an immediate link to ethnicity for Hașdeu—for instance, he made a reference to Theophrastian physiognomic characterology when stating that

81 “Cauzele și rezultățile Cosmopolitismului” in Hașdeu (2001), pp. 71–75.

82 “Discursul privind președinția societății Românișmul” in Hașdeu (2001), p. 66.

83 The intertwining of democratic and ethnic claims can be observed in his programmatic article, “Principii jurnalului Traian”; see Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 210.

84 “Patriotism și neîncredere” in Hașdeu (2001), p. 285.

85 “O voce năbușită” in Hașdeu (2001), pp. 189–193.

86 “Parlamentul românesc” in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 272.

the character of his political opponent, the liberal Rosetti, was not Romanian.⁸⁷

The most ample discussion of the topic is in his series of essays from 1868 under the title *The character of the Romanian nationality as the basis of its legislation*.⁸⁸ The essays deplored the import of political recipes from outside, more specifically that of legislative models. With reference to Montesquieu, he asserted that “national character” was the only fountain, only criterion, and only basis of legislation. Once again, in defining the national character he returned to his vision connecting ethnicity and political emancipation. When turning to the national character, he sought to refute the stigmatic stereotypes of Romanians in terms of barbarism. He stressed that the majority of negative stereotypes originated outside and were subsequently taken up by Romanian boyars to legitimize their oppressive measures against the common people. In contrast to these stereotypes, Hașdeu set himself the task of unearthing other sources where the true national character could be found.⁸⁹ Not surprisingly, he searched for this in the “national history”: in “those facts of Romanian history when our people manifested itself in a uniform manner”—geographical and historical distances notwithstanding. He also stressed the need for a systematic study of the national self—creating a scientific basis for his characterology.⁹⁰ On the whole, he asserted that the study of national character had to be based on the study of the past, and that this also exposed the need for a new and more coherent consciousness of the past as contrasted to the chaos of interrupted episodes.

The actual political goal of his essays was to prove that the Romanian people were marked with “extreme moderation” in the entire course of its history. This was crucial in order to attenuate the boyars’ fears that the introduction of a more extensive right of franchise would mean the triumph of unfettered demagogy. With his new narrative of national character, Hașdeu sought to prove that the danger of demagogy did not exist in Romania and thus democratic reforms were possible—and what is more, these reforms were “the necessary emanations of the Romanian national character.” The normative model here is an autochthonous democratic popular tradition vs. “alien” feudalism. He referred to the peaceful secession of the Roman *plebs* to the Aventine as

87 “Ce vrea Caimata?” in Hașdeu (2001), p. 360.

88 “Caracterul naționalității române ca baza legislațiunei sale” in Hașdeu (2001), pp. 156–168.

89 “Caracterul naționalității române ca baza legislațiunei sale” in Hașdeu (2001), p. 160.

90 “Caracterul naționalității române ca baza legislațiunei sale” in Hașdeu (2001), p. 186.

an example, which he considered directly connected to the mindset of the Romanians as the Roman folk traditions were “retained by the veterans on the Danube”—that is, the Roman component of the Romanian nation. This moderation can also be observed in the behavior of the Transylvanian peasant revolt of 1437—which he describes as an ethnic Romanian movement for national emancipation. The frequent wars of Romanian history, often turning Moldavia and Wallachia against each other, were not caused by the people either: the conflicts were never between the peasants (i.e., the Romanian nation) but between princes and boyars (who were *per definitionem* “aliens”).

‘OVERCODING’ THE ROMANTIC CANON IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Similar to the appropriation of Eminescu, Hașdeu also became a crucial reference for the nationalist projects of the interwar period. The most complex reconsideration of his intellectual heritage was attempted by Mircea Eliade (1907–1986), who undertook the publishing of his most important political and historical writings in a two-volume edition, coupled with a long introductory essay. It is instructive to look at Eliade’s re-reading of Hașdeu—discerning what a spiritual leader of the interwar generation considered relevant from the work of his “predecessor” and how he sought to create a tradition for his own attempts of re-narrating the national past in a new anti-historicist key. Eliade’s explicit program was to reintegrate Hașdeu into “the history of the civil moral and prophetic life of the century.”⁹¹ He was explicitly comparing him to Eminescu as the other source of inspiration—accentuating his contribution mainly to the philosophy of history and stressing his “prophe-tism”—the “only one from his generation who believed in the historical mission of Romanism.” Eliade also suggested a model of interpretation in terms of an “Encyclopedic tradition” of which Hașdeu was supposed to be the main protagonist—propelled by the “desire to force Romanian culture to jump as many stages as possible, raising it to ‘world level’.”⁹²

Thus, the attempt to create a national science becomes an indicator of a national prophetism, marked by the “thirst for the monumental,” “elect nation,” “civic optimism” and “Romanian Messianism.” In Eliade’s reading,

91 Hașdeu (1937), vol. I, p. V.

92 Hașdeu (1937), vol. I, p. XXXVII.

this encyclopedic tradition overlaps with the program of creating a modern Romania, a kind of national Renaissance—or “our humanism”—which, unfortunately mutated into philology and history too quickly. Apart from Hașdeu, the heroes of this national renaissance for Eliade were Bălcescu, Eliade-Rădulescu, and Eminescu, contrasting the “critical tradition” initiated by Titu Maiorescu, which Eliade considered a failure. The most important trait of these prophets in Eliade’s reading is the courage to relate to Europe face to face, on an equal basis,⁹³ being national and European at the same time, without complexes of inferiority or over-compensation. Interestingly, Eliade identified the root of the dissolution of this stance and the emergence of two camps fighting “for or against Europe” in the work of the revered Eminescu.

Hașdeu’s attempt to create a Romanian high culture also meant for Eliade a cognitive turn: propelled by the “Romantic passion of synthesis” it created an attitude appreciating the manifestations of culture in their complexity. What is more, by postulating a “magic method” of correspondences, harmonies and “original phenomena,” and turning the subjectivity of the genius into an objective method, Hașdeu actually “went beyond” the other Romantics and thus opened the road for the modern methods of cultural analysis professed by Eliade himself. Such innovations are “the organic and unitary conception”; the “passion of the beginnings”; the centrality of physiognomy, focusing on concepts like mission and destiny rather than mere historical sequence; and the vision of the “historically concrete, being represented by the collective.” Last, but not least, Eliade also points out that Hașdeu was the first to come up with concepts such as “national logic” and “Romanian science,” which Eliade praises as the first step towards the discovery of the cognitive entanglement of national identity.

All this says a lot about Eliade’s ambiguous relationship to Romanticism, professing its continuation but also formulating his criticism—perhaps even more than about Hașdeu’s own methodological toolkit. Beyond the methodological identification, Eliade tends to construct Hașdeu as the source of cultural-political revival, offering a potential synthesis (inherent in the polar structure of Romanticism which made it possible for contraries to be resolved in a higher synthesis) of values and attitudes that became fatally polarized in the process of Romania’s modernization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For Eliade, Hașdeu’s *Românism* is a normative principle of bridging na-

93 Hașdeu (1937), vol. I, p. XXXIX.

tionalism and universalism.⁹⁴ By rejecting the imported cultural and political patterns, he is able to bring together patriotism and democratic political convictions, which once again seemed to be in conflict for the ensuing generations. Hașdeu thus turns into a symbol of an indigenous cultural synthesis of European significance, that of “Romanian Romanticism,”—not an imported doctrine, but stemming organically from the local roots and on par with the Occident.

In this context, Eliade also contrasts his hero to the cosmopolitanism of *pașoptism*, sweepingly rejecting the latter, even though in the context of propheticism he was still praising Eliade-Rădulescu and Bălcescu. But on a more general level, Hașdeu provides Eliade with a matrix of a “positive” Romantic tradition, separated from the *pașoptist*-liberal canon. Hașdeu is also turned into a key reference in raising the issue of origins, so important for Eliade throughout his intellectual career, as the key historical problem—“he appeared as a meteor in the debate on origins.” Along these lines, Eliade postulates yet another line of tradition, drawing from Hașdeu through Nicolae Densușianu and Vasile Pârvan to Lucian Blaga.

In his effort to reinterpret his hero from the perspective of the anti-historicist intellectual atmosphere of the 1930s, Eliade also accentuates that Hașdeu’s vision of progress did not correspond to the mechanistic conception of the positivist mainstream. For him, human progress was only possible, not necessary, and destiny could not be derived from merely material factors.⁹⁵ Finally, quite predictably, Eliade also finds Hașdeu’s references to the “young generation” as a hope of recovery congenial to his own efforts. On the whole, Eliade considered Hașdeu’s legacy the most important in view of asserting the originality of the Romanian people and thus offering a new historical framework—based on the “totality of history.” He was “the only one to live a Romanian Romanticism and realized a Romanian magic vision” based on the “magic intuition of the world.” In this sense, his *oeuvre* is the most important blueprint for the modern Romanian culture trying to assert its originality—“his destiny is starting just now.”⁹⁶

While Eliade’s introduction was extremely skillful in weaving textual reconstruction together with developing the author’s own cultural-political agenda, we can find some ambiguities which shed a light on the fundamental differ-

94 See Hașdeu (1937), vol. I, p. LXX, where *Românism* is defined as the normative principle of institutions.

95 Hașdeu (1937), vol. I, p. LXXVIII.

96 Hașdeu (1937), vol. I, p. LXXX.

ence between the 19th-century, late-Romantic projects of national identity building and the new nationalism of the interwar period. First of all, Hașdeu's fusion of evolutionism and cultural relativism differed considerably from that of Eliade, who practically rejected the 19th-century notion of progress which Hașdeu did share, even if critically. Hașdeu's understanding of high and low cultures was also fairly different from what became conventional in the 20th century—characteristically, when talking about popular art as a source of understanding the people, he also included chronicles unproblematically, which in a different register would hardly fit into the conceptualization of folk culture.

Eliade is also surprisingly restrained when discussing the place of religion in Hașdeu's system. As a matter of fact, Hașdeu was a supporter of secularization, and he was even greeting the League of Freethinkers,⁹⁷ stressing that public instruction and morality should be independent of "any mingling of religion" and going so far as to link conceptually the Church with some other "public enemies" in a manner presumably uncomfortable for Eliade: "the fatherland of Stephen the Great, swerving with parvenus, Jews and monks."⁹⁸ Rather than any kind of political orthodoxism as it was envisioned in the 1920s, exactly this secularist discourse creates the place of a sacralization of the nation—manifested by such concepts as national "catechism,"⁹⁹ or "our political religion" [*religiunea noastră politică*].¹⁰⁰ Similarly, this makes it possible for him to envision Judaism not in religious but in ethno-cultural terms. Finally, while for Eliade's generation, orthodoxy was the natural context of mysticism, Hașdeu interpreted mysticism as a cultural phenomenon separate from Christianity (once again referring to Vico). It is understandable, then, that the mysticism of his last two decades¹⁰¹ after the loss of his daughter Iulia did not enter into any kind of interplay with his political nationalism and was as far as possible from shaping any kind of political orthodoxism.

97 "Bilanțul unui an" in Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 243–44.

98 "patria ciocoită, jidovită și călugărită a lui Ștefan cel Mare." Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 220.

99 Hașdeu (1937), vol. II, p. 287.

100 "O voce năbușită" in Hașdeu (2001), p. 192.

101 See Hașdeu (1892).

CONCLUSION

In the 19th century, Eastern European “national characterology” was mainly the battleground of the competing projects of “defending the local tradition” and “importing institutions from the West.” In the Romanian case, the turn of the 20th century witnessed the strengthening of the patterns of conservative characterology based on appeals to ethnic, rather than institutional continuity, which in many ways prepared the ground for the subsequent anti-historical turn. The emergence of Greater Romania in 1918 posed a set of questions, which the traditional discourse, based on historical-institutional continuity was unable to answer: from territorial/institutional changes, through the advent of mass-politics triggered by general franchise, to the agrarian reforms and the incredible growth of ethnic heterogeneity within the new boundaries. The collapse of the historicist discourse (which emphasized cultural and institutional continuity with the “glorious Middle Ages”) pushed the new generation of nationalist intelligentsia to separate the “normative past” from the historical process.

The core of this new discourse in Romania was an “atemporal” (e.g., in the case of Mircea Eliade) or “sub-historical” (Lucian Blaga) “*stylistic matrix*” which was held to determine the constitutive features of the community. This “stylistic matrix” unfolded against history, and its structure was to be revealed by means other than historical interpretation. In contrast, “nature” emerged as the basis of the community, and development was perceived not as external-historical, but as internal/self-reflexive. As Eliade put it in an article from this period, “the problem of Romanian soul is more of an ontological than of an historical issue.” History, which was the central notion of the Romantic characterologies, thus became derivative: couched in the *topos* of “historical destiny,” it turned into an object for metaphysical speculation. This development, as we could see above, had a very ambiguous relationship with the 19th-century discourses. While not being unrelated to the Romantic discourse of nationhood, the emerging “national ontologies,” counter-identifying the nation with “Western modernity,” meant the consummation of the Romantic nationalist discourse of specificity. Originally seeking to establish a symbolic framework exactly in order to facilitate the dialogue with the European models of political modernity, these constructions eventually opened the door to circumventing the Enlightenment model of “stadial history” by re-valORIZING archaism as a resource of national regeneration.

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BARBARIANS, CIVILIZED PEOPLE AND BULGARIANS

Definition of Identity in Textbooks and the Press (1830-1878)

DESI SLAVA LILOVA

Are Bulgarians barbarians or civilized? Answering this question consumed a considerable part of the intellectual energy of the Bulgarian elite in the 19th century. The dilemma was first put up for discussion at the beginning of the century and ever since then, each new generation has been joining a fresh round of the debate. Interest in the topic has been sufficiently lively to lend legitimacy to the “barbarism–civilization” taxonomy as the main framework within which the nation builds its identity. This research aims to explore the origins of this process. The analysis covers the period from the 1830s to the rise of the independent Bulgarian state in 1878. This is the chronological framework in which the intellectual elite imported and promoted the ideological grammar of modernity and the taxonomies of progress. The objective is to shed light on the history, mechanisms and results of their transfer.

TRANSFER AND ADOPTION OF THE DEFINITIONS OF BARBARISM AND CIVILIZATION

GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE VOCABULARY OF MODERNITY

Definitions of barbarism and civilization entered Bulgarian culture as part of geography classes. An explanation is needed here, firstly of why this kind of knowledge was taught in geography, and not history courses. The reason lies in the way in which the two subjects structured their field of knowledge in the 19th century. At this time there were two major branches of historiography: general (i.e., of all humankind) and specialized (i.e., of individual nations). The general history, however, was not exactly universal because it covered only those nations deemed to have contributed to the development of world

culture. A basic test for such a contribution was the formation of a state. Accordingly, "primitive tribes" and all other nations which did not reach the stage of statehood remained outside the scope of history's attention. In this respect, geography took a more liberal approach. Its subject matter was seen as descriptive, and not explanatory, and for this reason it did not require a preliminary selection of the facts to be studied. In fact, at this time, the geography framework sought to register, count and measure everything related to the Earth's human, economic and natural resources—from the Solar System to the minerals in the sub-soil. The stages of development reached by the different groups of the world population were also included in the scope of information as part of the fundamental knowledge of humankind.

The next question, which needs elaboration, concerns the effectiveness of geography teaching as a channel of transferring ideological notions. The marginal status of this scientific field in Europe casts doubts about its potential to function successfully as a mediator. In the first half of the 19th century, geography was seen as an applied science. It was primarily expected to serve the needs of trade and governments by supplying them with maps and statistical data, especially for the unexplored lands of the colonies. Its low reputation as a support discipline was mainly due to the absence of a distinct subject matter.¹

The inability of geography to establish its legitimacy as an autonomous science was evidenced by its modest place in curricula. It was called "one of the two eyes of history," together with chronology, and this cliché reflected objectively its pedagogical status. To put it briefly, geography was used primarily as a visualization of the historical scene. Its introduction as an independent subject took place relatively late. In most countries this happened after the 1870s. Before that it was traditionally taught in the form of a short introduction to history or language classes. Geography, however, had a strong presence in Greek schools as early as the end of the 18th century. But even there it was used first and foremost as an illustration of antiquity.²

Even though their educational models were imported from Western Europe, Bulgarian schools balanced the relative weight of subjects in an alternative way and this difference requires a careful analysis. First of all, geography held strong positions from the very beginning when it was first introduced in the 1830s and they were preserved until the end of the period under con-

1 On the state of geographic studies at the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century, see Broc (1994); Livingstone (1992); Nordman (1998); Godlewska (1999).

2 For more details on the use of geography in Greek schools, see Koulouri (1992).

sideration. Secondly, it did not have a support function, was not overshadowed by history and did not, therefore, need emancipation. Admittedly we do not have consolidated data about the curricula because the Ottoman ministry did not exert centralized control over the Bulgarian education system. Specifically for geography, however, all sources confirm that the subject enjoyed a solid reputation and popularity.

One indication is the number of textbooks in the subject. In the period between 1835 and 1874 there were a total of 41 editions (55 with reprints). By comparison, the total number of Bulgarian history books was 10, that is, nearly four times less. The lack of balance between the two subjects can be traced in the chronology of publications, too. It is remarkable that the first textbook on Bulgarian history (1844) was published exactly nine years after the first geography one. The other nine history textbooks came out during the last 17 years of Ottoman rule. In other words, this subject developed explosively and relatively late. By contrast, in the geography sector the publications were distributed evenly over a period of 40 years. Between one and five textbooks were coming out every year. The absence of historical atlases is another fact which suggests that under Bulgarian conditions, geography did not function as the "eye of history." Despite the obvious fascination with geography, no maps to illustrate the Medieval Bulgarian state were produced. And last but not least, it is symptomatic that historical data were often removed from the translations of textbooks. The reception of the French geographer Abbé Gaultier is an excellent example. His geography was translated by three different translators and went through eight new editions, which made it the most popular textbook on the subject.³ None of the translators considered it necessary to preserve the information about the past of each country included in the original.

How is to be explained this extremely un-classical balance between history and geography in the Bulgarian education system? There is no doubt that geography was the more developed of the two but this does not necessarily mean that it was considered to be the more important. It would be more plausible to claim that it was seen as the more easily accessible ideological resource. For the intellectuals of the time it was difficult to write a national history for several reasons. Firstly, there were no medieval chronicles preserved in the Bulgarian language in the 19th century. Information about the past was

³ The three translators of Abbé Gaultier are Gruev (1861, reprinted 1865, 1870, 1872, 1874); Manchev (1862, reprinted 1864); and Shapkarev (1868). Cf. Abbé Gaultier (1855).

therefore hard to gather since it was written in foreign languages and kept in libraries that were to be visited abroad. Secondly, being a very respected and established field, historiography was seen as the province of specialists with a qualification which Bulgarian authors did not have. Against this background we could assume that demand for Bulgarian history textbooks was high, but there were no authors in Europe to write them, which meant an absence of material for translation. This is why a long period of time had to pass before a qualified and confident national elite emerged and started filling the widening gaps.

This means that the early emergence, autonomous status and rapid development of geographies could be seen as a compensation phenomenon. The textbooks in this subject were not able not replace the missing story of the Bulgarian past, but they provided an alternative resource for collective identity construction. A key factor was the liberalism of their scientific perspective. To put it simply, the geographies distinguished Bulgarians as a separate entity, while the general history books ignored them. Even in the shortest textbook, the normally indiscernible Balkan ethnos was registered as part of:

1. the population of Europe;
2. the subjects of the Sultan;
3. the Slavic language family.

The facts were not numerous, but they could be amplified by any translator and this is the second advantage of geography. The description of human settlements does not require special expertise and a textbook stands to profit if it is enriched by the personal competence of the translator. In practice, in the first half of the 19th century, no other branch of science required a lower level of professionalism and it would have been surprising if the young Bulgarian intellectual elite did not seize this rare opportunity.

One could claim that through a coincidence of circumstances, geography, under Bulgarian conditions capitalized on its own imperfections. It was received with strong enthusiasm precisely because the discipline did not have its own subject matter and was devoted exclusively to the systematization of the results of analysis conducted by other sciences. Being at the early stages of development it was descriptive, superficial and eclectic. But this is precisely the reason why geography implied the possibility to be used as an encyclopedic database of modern rationality. Its framework contains practically everything—the cosmos, the planet, humankind, and its social order. When the written tradition of a culture has been interrupted for several centuries, the absorption of such an

elementary, but exhaustive compendium is more than important. This is a strategic necessity which might explain the unusual status of geography as the backbone of the educational curriculum. It gained ground not merely because it was capable of compensating for the deficit in Bulgarian history textbooks. Geography established its strong position as a tool of priority value which made it possible to promote none other than the alphabet of modernity.

GEOGRAPHY TEXTBOOKS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS

Notions of barbarism and civilization are key elements of the new “alphabet” that the Bulgarians were learning. Each geography textbook contains definitions of the two terms, but considering the large number of textbooks, the question arises: Which of the dozens of definitions was normativized? As regards “civilization,” this question is easy to answer since all textbooks define the term through a description of Europe.

As a rule, the continent is presented as two aspects: physical characteristics and population. In the case of physical characteristics, the focus is commonly on factors such as temperate climate and “central” location in the world. As regards the population of Europe, it is defined on the basis of several elements. Top priority is given to cultural development. According to all textbooks, what distinguishes the Europeans from the rest of the world’s population are above all their high achievements in science, technology and the arts. The second distinctive feature is the language families. According to the data offered in the textbooks, the overwhelming majority of the Europeans are speakers of languages of Latin, Germanic or Slavic origins. Classifications of the population by religion are common too. Here the accent is on the dominant position of Christianity. Racial classifications in general can be found in all geographies, but only one of the translated textbooks includes race in the definition of Europe. Conversely, the civilizational criterion figures in all geography textbooks. It proves to be the condition without which it is impossible to give an adequate answer to the question of “what is Europe.” For example, here is the standardized definition of Europe in Ioakim Gruev’s geography textbook, published in five editions:

What distinguishes Europe from the other parts of the world? Europe is the smallest of the five parts of the world but it holds first place; because its

population is the most intelligent, the best educated and, with its migrations, has had a great influence on the other parts of the world too. Trade, industry and education are the most developed in Europe, and this is due not least to the seas that wash its coasts from all sides and to its location between Asia and Africa.⁴

Similar descriptions are found in the other geography textbooks even though they were translated or compiled from different sources: French, Russian, German, American, and Greek. As the analyses of Miroslav Hroch and Bo Stråth show, the definitions of Europe given in the first Czech encyclopedia from 1862 and in the first Swedish encyclopedia from 1881 are almost literally the same.⁵ The invariant character and mass reproduction of this definition are symptomatic of its status in the 19th-century ideological canon. The concept of Europe as a measure of civilization and as the leader of global progress had acquired the status of elementary, basic knowledge without which it was impossible to enter the project of modernity. Why did the transfer of such a banalized definition cause complications in the Bulgarian context? To put it simply, the problem was that the normative idea of Europe made it difficult for the Bulgarians to identify themselves as Europeans. Admittedly, the Bulgarians met the formal criteria (territorial belonging, religion, language, race) but their level of development made them newcomers who could not measure up to the “leaders of progress.”

This structural imbalance could become the basis of the newly forming national identity because it was “scientifically” fixed in the geography textbooks. Here the definition of Europe is commonly in the introductory part and comes into question in the review of individual countries only if some sort of aberration could be indicated. The lesson devoted to European Turkey is a case in point. As a rule, it is noted that the population of this part of the continent is culturally and economically backward. By this cardinal indicator the sultan’s subjects, including the Bulgarians, differ from the other Europeans. But then what category do they belong to? Each textbook contains a scheme of the different levels of development, but unlike the definition of Europe, these classifications vary from one textbook to another and

4 Gruev (1861), pp. 75–76.

5 Hroch (2002), pp. 247–248; Stråth (2002), pp. 131–132.

therefore could not offer a normativized solution to the problem of Bulgarian identity.

The first inconsistency comes from the lack of consensus about the number of groups included in the classification based on a civilizational standard. According to some authors, there are two alternatives: "enlightened nations" or "savage tribes." The scheme in other textbooks, however, is more complicated, containing from one to four intermediate categories: "half-educated," "half-savage," "domesticated" or "barbarian." Predictably, the difference in the terms corresponds to a difference in the definitions of all these groups. Only the characteristics of the so-called "savage tribes" are more or less constant. They are described as hunting communities that live in caves, which makes it impossible to identify the Bulgarians with them. From this perspective, the intermediate groups look more promising but, on the other hand, their definitions vary greatly. According to some authors, the intermediate level is represented by nomads only, whereas other authors include here also sedentary peoples which are literate and agricultural, but lack achievements in the economy and culture.

The classifications contain only a description of the categories without giving any examples. However, the geographical zones of the "barbarian world" are outlined rather clearly: Southern Africa; Northern Asia; the two Americas; Australia and Oceania. In itself, this does not mean that all continents except Europe were regarded as "primitive." On the contrary, their definitions are balanced. For example, Asia is invariably defined as the cradle of human civilization, the remarkable progress of the "Europeans" in North America is noted, and Egypt's old glory adds a positive touch to the image of Africa. This compromise approach is more adequate to the Bulgarian case and could have been used as a matrix although none of the textbooks apply it to the definition of Europe. Europe was always considered to be a matrix of progress and in this sense it was simply impossible to imagine the existence of underdeveloped Europeans.

It is obvious that the education system found it difficult to give an unambiguous answer to the question of whether the Bulgarians are not Europeans. It used conceptual apparatus that did not allow clear identification of marginal cases. The most that could be achieved under the circumstances was to problematize the nation's undecided status as an anomaly. In practice, this basic lesson about Bulgarian identity went as follows:

There is no nation in Europe today that is contented to have nothing but agriculture, and all are eager to learn and improve everything. To achieve

this, all nations in Europe regard school as a source of everything that is good. Only we Bulgarians cannot boast this; but surrounded by an educated world, we will of necessity advance slowly.⁶

RECEIVING THE GEOGRAPHY LESSONS

How were the geography lessons received? The reactions of the press are a good indicator in this respect. The first marker is the way in which the new terminology was used. Unlike textbooks, which avoided directly identifying the Bulgarians with the barbarian world, newspapers frequently associated the nation's name with expressions such as "barbarians," "immature people" or "infant people." Although such definitions can be found in virtually all sorts of contexts, they are most common in articles on the development of the education system and the press. In the period under review, the newspapers and schools designed for the Bulgarian community were founded without any government financial support or control. That is why the very appearance of such institutions was a source of pride and was perceived as convincing evidence of the nation's choice and will to be "Europeanized." At the same time, however, the elite was constantly complaining about the pace of progress: about the number of schools, the quality of curricula, the poor qualification of teachers, the inert attitudes of village parishes, the low level of subscriptions to newspapers and magazines. The press abounded in debates on such issues and authors were very often brutal in expressing their disappointment. In such cases the Bulgarians were described as "unrefined and primitive," "an ungrateful and rude lot" that will "forever live in ignorance and poverty" and that "desecrates with its unworthy mouth the sacred names *nation* and *nationality*."⁷

Although the style of the geography textbooks was considerably more moderate, one will also find in them examples of stigmatization on the grounds of "hopeless barbarism"—as in the lessons about the Bushmen and the Hottentots, who were represented as specimens of the so-called "savage tribes." The analogy is symptomatic of the way in which the press put into use the taxonomies of the education system. First and foremost, the classification is simplified, and all intermediate categories are dropped. Consequently, markers

⁶ Blagoev (1874), p. 7.

⁷ See the editorials of *Bălgarski knizhitsi* [Bulgarian books], II (1859), 1; *Turtsiya* [Turkey], I (January 16, 1865), 28; I (19/06/1865), 48.

such as territorial belonging, religion, language family or race become irrelevant; there is no mention of hunters, farmers, sedentary peoples or nomads, and the world is divided into two: “enlightened” meaning Europeans; and “barbarians” meaning all others. What remains as a norm is the notion that the Bulgarians belong to both spheres at the same time. The textbooks register the dilemma but treat it quite unemotionally, using more complex definitions that give greater room for maneuvering. The press concentrates on the pragmatic aspect of the modernization process and addresses the problem of the level of education point-blank. From this perspective, there is one valid boundary between the “barbarians” and the “civilized” and it boils down to the will for education. Such an approach does not allow for anything in between, therefore hesitant progress is commonly interpreted as proof that the nation still belongs to the “barbarian” world.

The debate on how to catch up with the “enlightened peoples” dominated the public sphere for decades and left lasting imprints on the collective imagination. After all, the barbarian stereotype of Bulgarian identity would not have been so stable if it had not been reproduced within the framework of the modernizational ideology and by means of its rhetoric. The result is that once this inferiority complex had developed, no sphere was sufficiently immune to its vitality. This applies to virtually all spheres, including language, history and folklore or, in other words, the spheres in which the Bulgarians were presumed to have met and even surpassed the standards of “civilizational achievements.”

For example, the Cyrillic alphabet was seen as a priceless cultural heritage, a “patent” on the very tool of literate culture. But contrary to expectations, the literary output in this period did not acquire a high status similar to that of the language and alphabet. On the contrary, it was viewed critically and even negatively. In itself, such an attitude suggests that the nascent literate culture was regarded less as a realization of the potential of the language than as a result of the civilizational stage of the moment. Or, to quote the brutal formula of Vasil Popovich, at this stage it was inevitable that Bulgarian writers would produce “*gübre* literature”.⁸

Every nation has such *gübre* literature because every nation sets out from the same starting point as the other educated nations before it, and such

⁸ *Gübre* means „fertilizer, manure, dung” in Turkish. The author Vasil Popovich (1833–1897) was a famous literary and art critic. See Popovich (1874), p. 406.

literary *gübre* is now being created in our literature too. Young, inexperienced, enthusiastic, undiscerning, impatient, desperate, we Bulgarians will eagerly embrace anything that catches our eye [...], we will break, scrape, carve and hammer with our half-savage, unspent strength and fantasy until we suddenly realize that instead of defining clearly the form of our ideas, we have demonstrated our inept infancy.

History is a classical resource for constructing a prestigious identity and the Bulgarian case is no exception to this common rule. The Bulgarian historical heritage became the core of the national symbolic capital and that is precisely why the fact that even its value was questioned is quite telling. Two factors contributed to the development of such a tendency. In the first place, we ought to bear in mind that Bulgarian historiography was fighting for power over the collective imagination in direct rivalry with Greek ideologues. This practically means that aggressive articles published in neighbors' newspapers were being constantly reprinted or discussed. Under the circumstances, it would have been strange if there was anybody who had failed to understand that according to "Homer's grandchildren" the Bulgarians were heirs of "savage tribes."

World histories are another resource that confirms the impression that the Bulgarian symbolic positions were weak in a comparative context. Ten textbooks on the subject were translated, of which nine of the original books do not mention the name "Bulgaria" at all. Some (not all!) of the translators added passages or even whole chapters on the medieval Bulgarian State, but even they did not hide, but openly commented on the fact that they had had to intervene in the text. Therefore, the reading audience was forced to accept the thought that the lack of a Bulgarian "trace" did not prevent European science from creating a narrative of universal history. The foreign point of view could not in itself devalue, but it did constantly challenge the optimistic view of the intelligentsia that the story of the Bulgarians' past consisted of golden chapters. The reactions were different and controversial but in our case it is important to point out that in the 1870s, leading periodicals have offered strikingly skeptical recapitulations of national symbolic capital.

"We will only say," an anonymous writer in *Napredák* [Progress] notes soberly and sadly, "that world history generally counts Bulgaria as one of the barbarian peoples that over the centuries have attacked, laid waste to and weakened the development of the culture of the Greeks, whose culture is regarded as part of the universal heritage of mankind. In a word, the entire past life of the Bulgarian State is presumed to be something ephemeral, unserious

and totally in vain.”⁹ It is noteworthy that in the eyes of a number of authors even Tsar Simeon’s Golden Age (864–927) was not a sufficient guarantee of a “contribution” to civilization. The reason is that not even a single work from this age had survived. “Where is their poetry, where is their literature, where are the traces and lasting evidences of intellectual development, of their moral education, of their social and material well-being?” Marko Balabanov asks in this connection, only to conclude bitterly: “O Sancta Simplicitas! O Holy Bulgarian Innocence!”¹⁰

Analogous tendencies can be found in the attitude to folklore, too. The most scandalous example is Todor Shishkov’s lecture delivered in Constantinople in the autumn of 1869. In it the young speaker explained to his audience that Bulgarian folk songs reflected the status of women as slaves, which in its turn was due to “our distance from Europe” which “prevented us from adopting the chivalric ideas.” In his opinion, folk tales had another flaw, namely “unrestrained imagination full of exaggerations and vulgarity”: “Thus, instead of heroes we see in them monstrous *giants* personifying a material strength; strong people who, even in their childhood, will catch somebody by the hand or head only to tear them off; who have an oven-full of bread for breakfast and down a pail of wine or brandy in a gulp [...] All of it admittedly good, but the fantastic element in them lacks grace completely, all you see are *male and female dragons big and small* that play an important role in the community of our peasant girls and boys!”¹¹

Let us note once again that such debates are not representative of the way in which the national elite discussed Bulgarian history and folklore. But these marginal cases are worthy of note because they show that no zones were completely protected from the shadow of barbarian identity. Arguably, this was a side effect of modernity that was cultivated in the Bulgarian context. The question is: what were the results from this phenomenon?

⁹ *Kakva e sâshtinskata bolest na nashiit narod* [What’s the true malaise of our nation] (anonymous author 1875).

¹⁰ Marko Balabanov (1837–1921) graduated as a lawyer in Paris and worked as journalist in Constantinople; became the first foreign minister of Bulgaria after the appearance of a sovereign state in 1878. See Balabanov (1871), pp. 325–326.

¹¹ Todor Shishkov (1833–1896) graduated in Paris and Prague; became famous as a teacher, writer and journalist. See *Edin urok na g. Slaveikova* [A lesson to M. Slaveikov] (anonymous author 1869).

EMANCIPATION STRATEGIES FROM THE BARBARIAN STEREOTYPE

LEAVING ARCADIA: RESISTANCE TO THE BUCOLIC IDENTITY

The efforts to adjust the barbarism/civilization taxonomy to the Bulgarian context were energetic but haphazard, and therefore not always effective. The reception of the notion of a “Bulgarian Arcadia” is a typical example of a failed experiment. This vision was introduced into the public sphere through translations of travel accounts recording the impressions of European travelers of Bulgarian-populated lands. The initiative was launched by *Tsarigradski Vestnik* [Constantinople Gazette]. In 1853 the newspaper published an anonymous travel account that tells of young, slim, pretty women who sang and danced continuously while harvesting the fields. Their hair was hanging loose and their eyes were shining but innocent, and the author notes that this scene “calls to mind” scenes of “the pastoral life described so well by the ancients.”¹² References to Virgil’s *Idyls* and *Bucolica* are commonplace in European travel accounts and are actually a genre cliché. Pastoral utopia is the product of an erudite perspective that projects its phantasms on unknown areas of the world, including them in such a form in its established cultural order.¹³ As is known, Arcadia has been discovered more than once all over the world, therefore it is hardly surprising that at some point it was found on the Balkans, too. What is more interesting in this case is how the Bulgarians used the discovery that they were living in a bucolic paradise. How did they use the opportunity of constructing their collective image through the prism of an Arcadian identity?

The readers of *Tsarigradski Vestnik* first got the chance of seeing their imagined community in a pastoral light. The text, however, is without comment, so we do not know what the reactions to it were. More illuminating in this respect are the travel notes of the Irishman Robert Walsh, who also sees Bulgarian peasants as innocent children. An abridged version of the text was translated by Petko Slaveikov and published in *Mesetsoslov na bălgarskata knizhnina* [Menologion of Bulgarian Literature] in 1859.¹⁴ According to the

12 *Puteshestvenik nyakoi opisuva bălgarite* [An unknown traveler describes the Bulgarians] (anonymous author 1853).

13 For the dominant Western discourses constructing the Orient and the Balkans, see Said (1978); Todorova (1997); Wolff (1994).

14 The translator Petko Slaveikov (1827–1895) was a famous poet and journalist, one of the leading figures in the Bulgarian national movement. See Slaveikov (1859).

author, the Bulgarians have lost the militant spirit of their ancestors and have become “the simplest, gentlest and most obliging” ploughmen and shepherds. The traveler notes that they “do not have churches, schools or books,” concluding with satisfaction: “Just like the peoples from the Golden Age, evil things are unknown to them.” In his turn, the translator notes that some of those observations are no longer true because they were made 30 years ago, but the travel account is noteworthy because of the “accurate remarks” about the national character.

On the whole, one gets the impression that in the 1850s the bucolic version of Bulgarian identity was not resisted. On the contrary, the elite was obviously tempted by its potential for projecting in a prestigious way the disturbing lack of cultural and economic progress. One may say that the transfer of the stereotype got off to a promising start, but then the question arises: what brought about the radical twist in the 1860s? In this period interest in the Bulgarian image in the European imagination grew, and there were daily comments in the press on the opinions of politicians, scholars, writers, missionaries and even random interlocutors. The emerging national identity was influenced by the accumulation of such information, and the transformation of the notion of a Bulgarian Arcadia is a typical example of this.

The problem is that the pastoral utopia invented by travelers was transformed by diplomats into a conservative project for the solution of the so-called Eastern Question. The thesis of a peaceful Christian population that was prospering in the increasingly reformed empire was a key argument in favor of the Ottoman status quo. The Bulgarians were often cited as proof owing to the fact that their ethnic stereotype was already established and *de facto* served the political conjuncture. They were seen as meek, good-natured people who were happy in their patriarchal paradise and did not seem upset in any way by the sultan’s rule. It was also presumed that because of their innocent simplicity, the Bulgarians lacked historical potential and therefore did not deserve a chance for independent development.

As one could expect, the elite of the young nation was unpleasantly surprised by this use of the bucolic identity. The strongest reaction came from the political circle of émigrés in Romania, united around the project for a Bulgarian-Turkish monarchy modeled on Austria-Hungary. According to the newspaper of the dualists, *Narodnost* [Nationality], the level of development depends on the level of sovereignty. The prosperity of the Balkan neighbors—Greeks, Serbs and Romanians—whose national cause enjoyed the support of Europe is cited as proof. On this basis, Western diplomacy is accused of applying a double standard, which is treated as a crime against the universal laws

of progress. The only point of relative consensus is the notion of the Bulgarians as meek people. Yet according to *Narodnost*, these are not symptoms of an “infant nation” but of a fully “mature nation” that is trying to advance through education and hard work rather than through revolutions.¹⁵

This is one of the first anti-European debates in the Bulgarian public sphere and it is interesting in itself; what is more important in the context of this study, however, is its impact on the pastoral stereotype. There is no reason to doubt that the translation into political language transformed the blissful Arcadia into an anti-utopia. Child-like innocence proved to be shameful infantilism, predictably evoking a negative reaction which, however, does not necessarily mean that the counter-thesis about the Bulgarians as a “mature nation” was effective. As we have seen, the intelligentsia constantly criticized the pace of the nation’s modernization and in doing so resorted to extremely aggressive rhetoric. Thanks to this pedagogy, the reading public was objectively more familiar with the qualification “barbarians” than with the label “mature nation.” Instead of ceasing, or at least becoming less frequent, the reflections on the “infantile” stage in which the Bulgarians were at the time became a genre cliché. It entered the collective imagination as an anti-utopia and not as a bucolic idyll. The cultivated sense of shame about the status of an “infant nation” irreversibly devalued the symbolic capital of the pastoral stereotype and motivated a reorientation towards alternatives that had nothing to do with the conservatism of Rousseauesque utopias.

DISCOVERING “SAVAGE AND BARBARIAN EUROPE”: AUGUST SCHLÖZER AND HIS BULGARIAN RECEPTION

The most productive solution to the task of ideologizing the actual cultural backwardness in a sufficiently prestigious way proved to be that of importing academic works written in the tradition of evolutionism. The strategy was not to avoid the “barbarian” identity but, conversely, to historicize the stereotype of Europe. Simply put, the purpose was to get the collective imagination accustomed to the thought that nobody (the Europeans included) was born civilized, and therefore nobody (the Bulgarians included) is doomed to remain

¹⁵ See the editorials of *Narodnost*, II (November 24, 1868), 1; (January 19, 1869), 9; (January 26, 1869), 10; (March 23, 1869), 18. The arguments of the dualists against „the infant stage” of the Bulgarians are also set out in the booklet *Bălgariya pred litseto na Evropa* [Bulgaria in the face of Europe] (anonymous author 1865).

barbarian. This thesis seems (and is) entirely logical, but its propagation took many years and maximum efforts.

A key role in this process was played by the reception of the German historian August Schlözer (1735–1809). This encyclopedic scholar was held in exceptional esteem in the second half of the 18th century. His works on statistics made a ground-breaking contribution to the academic recognition of the discipline, and his innovative model of understanding and writing world history triggered a heated debate in intellectual circles.¹⁶ Especially influential were his studies on the languages and origins of the Slavs, the Hungarians, and the nations of Northern Europe. It was these studies that placed Schlözer at the centre of an international network of intellectuals who shaped the science of history and linguistics in Central Europe and Russia in the period. As Marie-Elizabeth Ducreux's analysis shows, the Göttingen professor became a cult figure for his Slav and Hungarian fellow scholars.¹⁷ In these circles he was referred to with reverence and cited much more frequently than Herder. It is no accident that in their correspondence two of the founders of modern Slavic Studies, Bartholomäus Kopitar and Josef Dobrovský, call their teacher "the immortal Schlözer."

Bulgarian intellectuals from the mid-19th century deeply respected August Schlözer too, but "discovered" him in an entirely different way. Although his contribution to the history of the Slavs was known and appreciated, the work that actually made him an authority in the Bulgarian context was *An Introduction to World History*. This is a book that does not deal with the Slavs at all. Nor does it deal with linguistic or ethnogenetic questions and therefore there was no way for it to be used as a classical tool of forming the Bulgarian national symbolic capital. So whence the strategic interest in it?

Above all we should bear in mind that this was not a standard work in the genre of world histories. In fact, August Schlözer was determined to refashion the tradition in this field and he proposed a new model. In his opinion the classical compilation of separate chapters devoted to the history of different countries was mechanic and conservative and should therefore be abandoned. The first purpose of his book was to identify the engines of progress that are not always and not necessarily related to the deeds of rulers, or to their wars. The author firmly believed that trade contracts or, say, the history of coffee offer considerably more valuable information in this respect. The second flaw

16 For an exhaustive analysis of Schlözer's contribution to the field of statistics and world history, see Lindenfeld (1997), pp. 40–45; Escudier (1999), pp. 254–296.

17 Ducreux (2005).

that was to be eliminated was the selective approach. According to Schlözer, world history could not serve its purpose if it discriminated against the majority of nations by excluding them from the historical narrative. To overcome these deficiencies, he proposed an alternative model based on four methods:

- 1) synchronic (analyzing events in a given period in different parts of the world);
- 2) technographic (tracing the development of sciences and the arts);
- 3) geographic (comparing the history of different regions);
- 4) ethnographic (studying all tribes that were present on the historical scene in a given age).

This was a radical attempt to revise the historiographical tradition and it was met with a mixed reception. Herder subjected the new model to scathing criticism and Schlözer responded by writing an entire book. On the other hand, the former students of the Göttingen professor as well as the members of his wide intellectual network reacted enthusiastically. Some of them founded and chaired departments of world history at their universities to apply their teacher's model.¹⁸ Of course, that does not mean that Herder was the loser and Schlözer the winner in this debate. As is known, Herder's views have had a decisive impact on the formation of a new type of historiography that participated directly in the construction of national identity. From this standpoint, the interest in the unique character of each nation obviously prevailed over the motives for seeking a liberal universalistic perspective. By the mid-19th century this tendency had reached its climax and Schlözer's model had long been consigned to oblivion. This, however, brings us back to the question of why the Bulgarians discovered the unused potential of Schlözer's approach precisely in the period in question.

It must be noted that what was translated into Bulgarian was not Schlözer's seminal theoretical work *An Introduction to World History* but his adapted version for children.¹⁹ This is a textbook that discusses in lay terms not methodological but ideological questions. Schlözer's task is to help young readers understand why everybody—not only the “civilized” but also the “barbarians”—have a place in the historical narrative. For the purpose, the textbook recreates only the age before the discovery of writing and the creation of

¹⁸ Specifically about the debate between Schlözer and Herder, see the analyses of Escudier (1999), pp. 283–285; Ducreux (2005), pp. 265–267.

¹⁹ Schlözer (1779).

states when all humankind was in a “savage state.” This unusual choice makes it possible to criticize in a convincing and simple way assorted “proofs” of the hereditary superiority of the civilized over the barbarian world. As Alexandre Escudier writes, the advantage of this perspective is that it eliminates the sense of a cultural abyss between the different nations and cultivates a consciousness of belonging to one universal brotherhood.²⁰

For a community with a low level of development and even lower self-esteem such a lesson on the subject of “barbarism/civilization” was critically important, and we have reason to believe that it was well-received. The textbook was translated twice, in the 1850s and in the 1860s;²¹ it was recognized as a tool of strategic importance and introduced into the curricula as an autonomous subject. The most remarkable evidence of the exceptional productiveness of this ideological transfer is the popularity of the image of the “savage and barbarian Europe,” as August Schlözer describes it in his *Introduction to World History*, to persuade readers that civilization is not something hereditary. Although the thesis is simplified to the extreme, in the context of the Bulgarian 19th century it became an ideological tool of enormous motivational power. This explains why the image that embodies it persisted in the press for decades. The pleasure of reflecting on the distant past in which England, France and Germany were “covered with woods and forests in which coarse and beast-like savages lived here and there” did not diminish, and ultimately the image of the “savage and barbarian Europe” was normativized as a counterpoint to the “enlightened Europe” of modern times.²²

The second important result of Schlözer’s productive transfer is connected with the gradual formation of an alternative theoretical canon that did not overlap with the most authoritative names in Western Europe at the time. The need for scientific tools to eliminate the acquired barbarian inferiority complex created extremely unfavorable conditions for the reception of all kinds of ideologies legitimating the boundary between the “civilized” and all others. For example, the theories of segregation on a racial or climatic basis were subjected to sharp criticism, as was the theory of the four temperaments determining the character and hence the potential of every nation. Especially symptomatic in this respect is the blocked reception of Charles de Montesquieu. The response to his theory of the objective superiority of the North

20 Escudier (1999), p. 267.

21 For both translations, see the analysis of Lilova (2003), pp. 167–181.

22 Iliev (1875), p. 46.

over the South was extremely negative. In the 1870s this subject sparked a debate that spread to almost all newspapers and magazines. This in practice meant that the public sphere was literally flooded with articles reminding readers of the flowering civilizations of North Africa, Southern Europe and Central Asia at a time when “today’s most enlightened inhabitants of the globe were barely different from savages.”²³ Unlike Montesquieu, the German Darwinist W. F. A. Zimmermann (d. i. Carl Gottfried Wilhelm Vollmer) and the French anthropologist Antoine de Quatrefage were immensely popular. Their names were cited as authoritative on the questions of racial prejudices, which were likewise discussed frequently in the press. Especially active was the highest-circulation magazine, *Chitalishte* [Reading Room], whose readers were regularly prompted to reflect on the absurdity of measuring the skulls of nations:

“The question then is, is the brain in the skull of the present-day Greeks or Italians less than the one that their ancestors had in the time of Alexander or Ceasar,” one of the magazine’s contributors asks readers provocatively. “The Turks and the Magyars are nations from the first Asian family line and the make of their skulls is not so pretty, but they nevertheless conquered the Caucasians and for a long time were the scare and horror of the Germans and the other Europeans.”²⁴

As we can see, the composition of the newly forming theoretical canon is quite eclectic. It includes authors who are as a rule marginal in their own context and belong to different theoretical traditions but whose visions allow, in one form or another, the assertion of a fundamental egalitarianism between the “barbarian” and the “civilized” world. Bulgarian intellectuals recognized these authors as bearers of strategically important knowledge and directly invested this capital in the construction of national identity. In this way they won an ideological ground that allowed the Bulgarians to accept—without enthusiasm but also without a surplus sense of drama—the fact that in many respects the nation was still a “newcomer.” As with any other stage of development, the spokesmen of modernity claimed, this is an entirely normal period which is to be outgrown in an entirely rational way. Or as the newspaper *Napredak* [Progress] wrote in the 1870s, it is possible to presume that the

23 Balabanov (1870), p. 135.

24 Dushanov (1873), pp. 887–889.

Bulgarians had nothing to “bolster and inspire” them. But this does not necessarily mean that it is impossible for “us to create a nation that will be envied by both Germans and Americans.”²⁵

EUROPE AS A COLONIAL MASTER: THE DEBATE ON RAILROADS

The persistent efforts to normativize Schlözer’s paradigm produced a considerably more positive result than the attempt to “enter” the conservative utopia of the bucolic identity. Yet even so, there were zones in which the chosen strategy for “adapting” the project of modernity proved far less productive. A typical example is the reaction of the intelligentsia towards the economic contacts with Europe. It is no accident that this subject was much more rarely discussed in the public sphere and, when it was, the opinions lacked the optimism typical of the period in question. An even more symptomatic deviation from the adopted standard is the absence at least of an attempt to identify with Europe where goods and markets are concerned. The catastrophic difference between the Bulgarians and the Western powers in this field blocked the sense of belonging to the “civilized” world and prompted spontaneous empathy with the “barbarian” world.²⁶

It is noteworthy that virtually any occasion associated with the economic imbalance between the Bulgarians and Europe provoked debates about the unscrupulous style in which the West exploited undeveloped nations. The authors described in detail the effects of the colonial system that a nation can enter easily but exit with difficulty and with bad prospects of development since the country’s natural resources would have already been exported by the foreigners. Everybody seemed convinced that this was the future that lied in store for the Bulgarians too if they did not invest in industrialization. As the newspaper *Makedoniya* [Macedonia] put it, “it won’t be long before we find ourselves, much to our regret, empty-handed and as naked and starving on dry hills as the Africans in their deserts; everything will disappear from our hands, and we will live in misery.”²⁷

25 *Kakva e sāshtinskata bolest na nashiit narod* [What’s the true malaise of our nation?] (anonymous author 1875).

26 The clash between utopia and reality in the Bulgarian image of Europe is analyzed from different perspectives by Daskalov (1998); Kiosev (1997); Mishkova (2004).

27 *Pismo ot Kukush* [A letter from Kukush] (anonymous author 1869).

Still, if we must point out the crucial factor for the stabilization of the colonial model as a pattern of thinking about the economic relations between the Bulgarians and Europe, this is the debate on railroads. It was provoked by an editorial of the newspaper *Turtsiya* [Turkey] headlined *Prazni nadezhdi* [Vain hopes].²⁸ The article criticized a forecast in the French-language newspaper *La Turquie*, according to which “crisscrossing the country with railways” would be enough to “make Turkey a rival of the United States.”²⁹ The author of ‘Vain hopes,’ Todor Ikonov thought that this was impossible. Railroads, he reasoned, certainly did not originate as a basis for industry. They were invented only when industrial output grew to an extent that made its quick transportation imperative. The Bulgarian productivity rate, however, was low and, according to the analyst’s calculations, three calendar months would be enough to export the total output—two months for the grain crop plus another one for the other goods. This raised the question of who had built a railway line with such low effectiveness, and why. Ikonov’s answer was that the facility does not really belong to the Bulgarians and was not designed to satisfy their modest needs. It was linked to the lines in Europe and, as such, was entirely lucrative because it was designed for import, and not for export. According to the author, the problem was who stood to gain from the shock integration of undeveloped regions into the market of modernity. “This is good, but not for us,” the young critic explained to readers. “Our goodwill consists of the consolation that we have helped the Europeans to derive all possible benefits from our fatherland and to turn us gradually into their slaves, if not physically than at least mentally—mind-wise.”

In sum, the conclusion is that from a “Turkish territorial” point of view the railroads are harmful because they are a tool of colonial power. The criticism is radical, but this does not necessarily mean that it attacks the basic elements of the normative concept of the technologies of modernity. Ikonov does not call into question the idea that railway transport is a tool of progress. He does not doubt that huge profits can be made from the quick transportation of goods. He only doubts that the Bulgarians have goods that are worth transporting, but this is a different problem. Ikonov elaborates an overall program for its solution, publishing it in a series of seven articles devoted to the

28 The author Todor Ikonov (1838–1892) was an influential journalist and leader of the Bulgarian national movement. See Ikonov (1871).

29 See Alexandar Vezenkov’s text in this volume for a comprehensive analysis of the newspaper *La Turquie* whose ideological platform instigated constant debates in the contemporary Bulgarian press.

different branches of the Bulgarian economy.³⁰ The strategy is simple: rapid modernization of industry by introducing new technologies; not only training but also importing qualified specialists; enlargement of enterprises; uniting of financial capital; industrialization and orientation of trade towards promising market segments.

The last thing that can be said of such a program is that it is counter-modern. It does not advocate the return to sources such as folk art, poetry and customs, nor does it lament the dissolution of the normative national character. What is revised here is not the project of modernity but the concept of the regime in which it functions. In Ikonomov's vision, the exchange of ideas, technologies and goods departs from the regime of utopia and enters the regime of the market. Hence the change of rules: not solidarity and universal fellowship, but interests, competition and, respectively, power, which you either have and exercise, or do not have and submit to. The sober and pragmatic logic of this economic nationalism (in the classical tradition of Friedrich List) was popularized very quickly and effectively. Almost all newspapers and magazines took part in the debate on railroads. The expected profits from the new kind of transport were calculated with caution, and this common reserved attitude proved to be one of the few points of relative consensus among otherwise irreconcilable political parties, wings and individual figures in the national elite.

We should also take into account the fact that the moral damage from intensive contacts with Europe were mentioned very rarely—just in two out of dozens of articles on the subject.³¹ Such a percentage of moral conservatism is far below the level that could have been expected. Moreover, even in those two individual cases the harm to patriarchal innocence is a marginal argument, the basic thesis being premised on entirely economic grounds. Finally, we ought to keep in mind that the press continued publishing panegyrics on engineering “miracles,” such as tunnels, bridges, canals and railway lines in inaccessible regions—even in the same issues of newspapers in which it was claimed that in the Bulgarian case, in particular, railways did more harm than good.

In itself, the ambivalence of this inconsistency suggests that the elite's reaction was indeed extreme, but it did not signal a conservative “counter-revolution.” There is much more pragmatism than myth in it, and in this sense

30 See the editorials of *Turtsiya* [Turkey], VII (October 23–January 8, 1872), 36–47.

31 See *Sreshthu zheleznitzite* [Against the Railroads] (anonymous author 1873); Botev (1876).

it tends to balance rather than to compete with the normative utopia of the idea of progress. In the Bulgarian context, rapid modernization required import and the adoption of new cultural products, ideas, technologies and goods. In principle, this active transfer was ideologized as gift-exchange and was therefore perceived positively and even enthusiastically. The expansion of the Western market on the Balkans upset this symbolic economy because it did not function in the gift-exchange regime. It provoked a quest for an ideological model that reflected the real inequality in the competition between European import and Bulgarian output.

Colonialism proved to be an adequate matrix for this purpose because it practically did not require changes in the basic conceptual apparatus. The concept of Europe's dominance and the "barbarian" status of the Bulgarians had become normativized and that is precisely why it was easily transferred from the utopia to the anti-utopia of modernity. Ultimately, it would have been strange if a community with such a deeply cultivated self-perception of backwardness had failed to discover the "dark" side of its relations with the "civilized" world. What is remarkable in this case is, rather, something else. The debate on railways is indeed a symptom of resistance, but the latter was aimed not against the project of modernity but against the unequal opportunities of those willing to take part in it. This series of publications expresses the deepest reservations against the technologies and ideologies of the progress that the young nation's ideologues had. But even so, the prospect that was outlined was not of a return to Arcadia by ox-drawn carts but, conversely, an economic leap that would make railroads necessary. The position was anti-European but not counter-modern and this distinction between Europe and modernity deserves attention since it was not a lesson that could be learnt from 19th-century textbooks. The question is what does this entail? Does it mean that there was an attempt to create an alternative project of modernity from the point of view of the European periphery?

In my opinion such a hypothesis would be much too radical. There are no real grounds to speak about some "Bulgarian grammar of modernity." There are, however, grounds for acknowledging the development of peculiar model that helped to adapt the basic ideological concepts of modernity for Bulgarian use. The emergence of that model was provoked by the transfer of the new ideological dictionary introducing the idea of progress. The reception of the definitions of barbarism and civilization proved to be especially difficult as the Bulgarians failed to reach completely neither the first nor the second set of standards. The construction of collective identity on the base of "anomaly" was not a promising start and predictably the search for a solution consumed a lot

of intellectual energy. Of course, the Bulgarian nation was not the only one that came up against such a problem. On the contrary, most of the nations throughout the world have stepped into modernity from the poor position of "beginners." From this point of view, the situation was actually standard and the only peculiarity lies in the way the Bulgarians tried to cope with the problem. To put it briefly, they did not follow either of the two classical models of emancipation from the barbarian stigma. The first model entails the use of the historical past as a priority resource to build an identity. The ancient and/or medieval accomplishments are incorporated in the national image as a guarantee for the "natural" right of affiliation to the "civilized world." In the second model the barbarian is not rejected. Instead it is aestheticized as a sign of vitality, primal force, innocence and morality, i.e., qualities which compensate for the lack of "contribution" to world culture.

As we have seen, the 19th-century Bulgarian elite explored the potential of both strategies. The results, however, remained only relatively successful. The political implications of the bucolic utopia were the main factor leading to the marginalization of Arcadia as a projection of identity. History proved to be a much more productive resource, although its effectiveness was also restricted. The barbarian stereotype kept dominating the collective imagination despite their ancestors' glory. This failure to create a sufficiently prestigious identity for the emerging nation motivated the reorientation towards different sort of strategies. The alternative chosen by the elite was to make the definition of Europe more relative. This way the simultaneous belonging to both the "barbarian" and the "civilized" sphere was supposed to lose its status of anomaly and become a norm. The design was neither easy nor trivial since it necessitated changes in the basic taxonomies of modernity. This explains the emergence of theoretical canon, which was borrowed from Europe and yet did not replicate the Western matrix. The main purpose of this selective ideological import was to promote works that represented the lack of essential difference between the civilized and everybody else. As a result, the image of "savage and barbarian Europe" from time immemorial has been asserted as a legitimate part of "enlightened" European identity. And it was this ambivalence that finally allowed the Bulgarians to recognize themselves as Europeans.

Herein lies the peculiarity of the 19th-century Bulgarian way of domesticating the taxonomies of modernity. The definitions of civilization and barbarity remained in the form they were fixed in the geography textbooks. What changed as a result of the transfer was the possibility to apply both definitions to Europe and hence to everybody else. This outcome was regarded as strategic ideological capital and was invested directly in the foundations of the na-

tional identity. On this flexible basis, the collective subject “we, the Bulgarians” could refer legitimately both to “we, the Europeans” and “they, the Europeans,” “we, the barbarians” and “they, the barbarians.” It is hard to assess the advantages and disadvantages resulting from the chosen strategy to accommodate the project of modernity for Bulgarian use. On the one hand, it certainly helped to marginalize the more conservative ways of coping with the barbarian complex. On the other hand, the constant presence of alternative answers to the question of “who we are” is pregnant with a crisis potential. The equilibrium is delicate and could be rationalized as a product of transfers caused by both necessity and initiative. It is precisely this balance of determinism and choice, domination and resistance that is worth investigating because ultimately its results make up the history of modernity in the “barbarian” periphery of the “civilized” world.

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NARRATING “THE PEOPLE” AND “DISCIPLINING” THE FOLK

The Constitution of the Hungarian Ethnographic Discipline and the Touristic Movements (1870-1900)

LEVENTE T. SZABÓ

Preparadigmatic and early paradigmatic ethnographic imagination and practice played a crucial role in mid- and late 19th-century Hungarian nation-building. Different versions of national identity competed within the new discipline called ethnography. They used, translated, transformed, and remade the emerging discipline. In order to map these transformations, I will focus both on the ideological transfers and on the internal cleavages to simultaneously see the sources, and the reception of texts and phenomena that are used in the crossings and interactions of this disciplinary formation.

At the same time, this train of thought is also a broad history of the early (preparadigmatic and early disciplinary) phases of Hungarian ethnography. As such, it will try to follow the history of the professionalization and “disciplinarization” of ethnography along several shifts: from the mainly textual interest of Hungarian ethnography of the 1840s–1860s to the “visual turn” and exhibition of folk objects of the 1870s, and to the complex interaction of the phenomena of tourism and ethnography in the last two decades of the 19th century. In following these shifts, it will attempt to understand and analyze how the emergence of this new discipline coincided with the rise of the nation-building process of modernity, and what were the consequences of their complex and multi-layered relationship.

THE VISUAL SHIFT IN HUNGARIAN ETHNOGRAPHY: THE POLITICS OF MUSEUM-MAKING AND THE DIFFERENT VISIONS OF THE NATIONAL

Some museums are sites of scientific research, and some collections have been formed as part of the development of particular scientific disciplines. In this way, they have played important roles in the constitution of scientific knowledge and helped to define and perform scientific conceptions of “truth”

and "objectivity." Furthermore, all objects bestow meaning upon their production, display and consumption. We respond less to the intrinsic attributes of cultural goods than to the symbolic meanings attached to them. Hence the processes, the interest groups, the negotiations of meanings, the silencing or overemphasizing of elements inherent in the process of constructing an exhibition cannot be neglected when trying to analyze both synchronic and diachronic phenomena of museum culture. Exhibitions and museums are always linked to visual narratives that arise from historically and disciplinarily different taxonomies. These taxonomies have a poetics embedded in visions and relationships of power. The establishment of the ethnographic section of the Hungarian National Museum was strongly intertwined with such visions of nationhood and ethnicity, revealing the subtle struggles and shifts within the new discipline.

The idea of establishing a separate section of ethnography (actually ethnology) in the Hungarian National Museum clearly brought a gradual shift regarding the focus of the ethnographic discipline: from the text to the object. Thus the folk were represented not (or not mainly) by what it said, but by the objects it produced or lived by. This shift could not only be linked to the restructuring of visual culture (a sign of which was the new, public role of the museums), but also to the formation of the new disciplinary system and the new taxonomies standing at the basis of scientific categorization. The Hungarian National Museum gradually became a site of public display from a site of research: the 1840s already brought about the first disputes on whether the museum should be open to a wider public (transcending social boundaries) or only to research. The debates commented mainly on the character of the general public and whether this public could be transformed so as to produce citizens who would themselves take on the task of self-improvement. These debates and the gradual opening of the Hungarian National Museum for the wider public brought about also a change in the production, distribution and consumption of "exhibitional knowledge."¹ This new exhibitional knowledge comprised not only the public museum practices, but also a new culture of local, national and international exhibitions. In Hungary (too) the politics of exhibiting the modern nation went hand in hand not only with the advent of the museums, but also with the theory and practice of the national exhibitions. A telling sign of this can be that the first debates over (and the change of political vocabulary describing) the meta-

1 Among the secondary literature on the Hungarian ethnographic context surrounding the establishment of the Ethnographic Museum, see Gráfik (1997); Szilágyi (1990); Szemkeő (1997); Balassa (1972); Hofer (1991).

morphosis of the visitors of the museums coincided with the advent of the national exhibitions. The national exhibitions staged relatively new identity components that were to become paradigmatic: they brought to the forefront assumptions of social identities (work as the basis of gaining social status, social ascent through qualified work, specialization and learning), and also canonized the figure of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurial values in national culture. It was again the national exhibitions (and the international ones) that helped to domesticate a new type of social identity. By emphasizing values like professional labour and craftsmanship, and linking all these to education and professional formation, they not only helped to canonize professional identity, but also inscribed the historical components of this identity into the politics of exhibiting the nation. On the other hand, exactly this symbiosis of the different forms of social identity led to nationalization of the professional identity: concepts of craftsmanship and specialization were permeated with notions of ethnicity and the national. The nationalization of professional identity (including that of the emerging ethnographic profession) was due also to a competitive dimension of "national exhibitionism": at the "universal" exhibitions, of which the Great International Exposition held at Crystal Palace in London in 1851 was the first,² nations were awarded medals and ranked in ceremonies (later) modelled on the Olympic Games. This competitive dimension brought completely new aspects also into Hungarian national exhibitions. For instance, a remodelled version of this pattern can be found in the way some 19th-century commentators of the 1885 general exhibition were linking the events to a vindicative type of politics in which the nation was assumed to assert itself. They were using Western models of competitive exhibitions, but at the same time they reworked them. The former Western pattern was used against "the Western exhibitions" to assert an alleged equality of the Hungarians with the Western world: "The 1885 Budapest exhibition was a complete success. [...] If all the aliens saw a paramount political significance in the exhibition (at which crown and nation have more intimately been bound than ever before during the last two centuries), why should we ignore the momentous economic character of our national enterprise. Let us regard it a memorial that leads us from the backwardness of the past, through the progress of the present to the successes of the future"³—as Károly Keleti put it in the official report of the exhibition.

2 For an excellent overview of this paradigmatic exhibition and its consequences in canonizing powerful cultural images about this phenomenon, see Auerbach (1999).

3 Keleti (1886).

But the national itself was a multi-layered pattern at these exhibitions that were partly or entirely ethnographic: they presented us with different vocabularies of the national. The 1885 exhibition mixed the vocabularies of nationhood: it contained a subtle co-mingling of the double roles, of Hungarian king and Austro-Hungarian emperor, of Francis Joseph and the alternation of the concept of the *patria* and that of the ethnic nation. Unlike later (for instance, during the Hungarian millennial celebrations in 1896) these did not seem to come into contradiction, but co-existed unproblematically in 1885. This was also due both to the fact that Hungarian ethnography in the 1880s was mainly of ethnological character (regarding especially the ethnographic section of the Hungarian National Museum) and to the fact that the Hungarian objects were only having their first successes and it was mainly the *Kronprinzenwerk* that set the standard in interpreting these objects. In the 1880s the strongest way to define the ethnographic discipline was linked to this so-called *Kronprinzenwerk*, the collection of volumes entitled *The Austro-Hungarian Empire in Words and Pictures* patronized by Prince Rudolf himself. In the programmatic and highly influential introduction of the project he was coordinating till his early death, he connected ethnography with the idea of strengthening the feeling for a common *patrie* and patriotism in the monarchy. In his vision, ethnography seemed to be the chief discipline able to convey this type of loyalty to the masses:

The study of the people living within the borders of this monarchy offers excellent possibilities not only to the scholar, but it has quite an important practical role in improving general patriotism. The more we study the good qualities of the groups of people, respectively their mutual dependence on one another, the more we'll strengthen their feeling of being together, a feeling that should connect the people of our country.

Those groups of people who seem to be different from the core of the country due to their language, customs and historical evolution will seek for their spiritual centre in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy when they will encounter a true scientific interest in their national character. That is the reason for the paramount importance of ethnography and its related sciences in our country. [...] Is there any country so rich and various in economic and geographic qualities, a country that shows the coexistence of the different ethnographic groups in such an enthralling way than our monarchy does? [...] we will highlight how one group of people came close to the other, how these different people came to be united by the power of their own common interest. We will stress the way their inner

connection became natural law and that is the image of our present days, the image of a huge and powerful Austro-Hungarian monarchy (the *patrie* of all of us).⁴

In the 1890s, the establishment of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society occurred in terms of the so-called empire-identity already known from the *Kronprinzenwerk*. But the first texts commenting on the Society (and its aims of establishing a separate ethnographic museum) suggested divergent images of what Hungarian ethnography should be. These different types of comments regarding the aims of disciplinary ethnography were mixing the vision of the supra-national (expressed by the *Kronprinzenwerk*) with an ethnic concept of the nation. According to the latter, ethnography was meant to prove an alleged cultural superiority of the ethnic Hungarians over other, non-Hungarian ethnic communities of Hungary. But some of the essays mixed the two programs within one train of thought, remaking both of the concepts: "The aim of the [Hungarian Ethnographic Society] is to study the contemporary and bygone people of the Hungarian state and historical Hungary. [...] By gathering all sorts of phenomena of the people living in this country, the Society will raise and maintain the friendly accordance and the sense of belonging together."⁵ In a famous text upon the tasks of the Ethnographic Society, Antal Hermann incorporated the words of Mór Jókai, the famous writer and main Hungarian contributor to the *Kronprinzenwerk* into a completely different framework: the political vocabulary of national and ethnic struggle. Thus his paper, entitled *Upon the founding of a national ethnographic museum*, translated and reworked the original supra-national idea of an ethnography bringing peace to the people of the empire into an efficacious discipline to be used as a weapon against other ethnic and national communities: "Our greatest living poet who called ethnography 'his companion always full of ideas,' also emphasized with the spirit of a clairvoyant that it will be the consequence of the spread of ethnography if eternal peace ever comes into being. Eternal peace is a glorious dream, and till it comes true much fight will take place and ethnography will be both the realm and the instrument of these fights. It is for the assurance of our national life if we prepare the arsenal of this peaceful war: the Hungarian national museum."⁶

4 Budapest, 1887, pp. 5–9.

5 Pál Hunfalvy's presidential inauguration [of the founding séance of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society] *Ethnographia* 1890, pp. 2, 7.

6 *Ethnographia* 1890, p. 24.

An official letter, written by the newly established Committee for Museums of the Ethnographic Society and addressed to the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, portrayed the situation of ethnography in terms of ethnic nationhood. The letter not only interpreted ethnography as the best discipline for national self-cognition, but also envisioned an allegedly unstable and inhomogeneous past for the nation that required such a discipline to control a process of nation-formation (that was still incomplete): “[W]e have to come to know ourselves, and this is a more serious, but valuable scientific issue at us than it is at other people. This is so because we are in the interesting position of being a former immigrant race under the natural supremacy of which a whole bunch of nationalities formed a thousand-year state. Nay, the evolution of this state is still going on.”⁷

The interplay of these different visions about the future of the discipline and its main goal, the founding of a separate ethnographic museum, made their impact on the different patterns of objects and collections of the separate ethnographic section and museum that was finally founded after the immense success of the ethnographic exhibits at the grand exhibition celebrating the Hungarian millennium in 1896. The subtle interplay of all these concepts was already present also in the organization of the ethnographic knowledge at the 1896 exhibition that was expected to provide the material to the foundation of a separate and independent ethnographic museum. In a letter to the director of the National Museum, János Jankó, the well-known scholar and later the first director of the Museum of Ethnography, explained his conception on how the future museum should be organized: “1. Our first task is to show the objects of the people of our *patrie*: i.e., the objects the Hungarians and the nationalities.[...] In order to understand the ethnography of our nationalities, these groups should be compared to their own core people as they are the fragments of a foreign core. [...] In order to understand the ethnography of the Hungarians, we need historical ethnography that brings to the forefront the aboriginal character of the Hungarians.”⁸ Jankó put together different types of criteria and made the ethnographic village of the Hungarian millennial exhibition a scene of the already problematic oscillation between the representation of “millennial” and ethnic character of the Hungarian “people” and the supra-national conception of nationhood. This double-sidedness could be followed well through the two main loci of the exhibition where ethnogra-

⁷ *Ethnographia* 1890, p. 96.

⁸ Szemkeő (1997), p. 76.

phy demanded a special place: the ethnographic village (that was thought to represent the [then] contemporary folk architecture of Hungary⁹) and the exhibition of archaic Hungarian trades (which was part of the historical exhibition and was organized by Ottó Herman).

Since the material of the temporary exhibition was preserved—and like in many cases in and outside Europe—became the core of a permanent exhibition, these elements came together again in 1898 at the opening of the new, desired permanent exhibition. The situation was even more complex, since the new ethnographic units were integrated into the former ethnological ones. The collections of the new establishment were: Malayan-Papuan culture; Indo-Chinese culture; American ethnography; West African ethnography; Caucasian collection; Finno-Ugrian room; Hungarians of Cisdanubia; Hungarians of Transdanubia; Hungarians of the Tisza region; Hungarians of Transylvania; ethnography of the minorities in Hungary and objects of archaic occupation (hunting, pastoral life, etc.).¹⁰

The different sections entailed completely different visual narratives, they offered divergent interpretations of their objects, and they linked their objects to different narratives of the national. For instance, the establishment of the fishing collection of the Ethnographic Museum as a separate, distinct subcollection was not a matter of chance, but it signalled the preferences of the professionalizing ethnographic discipline. The existence of a separate fishing collection was due to a coherent theoretical program of Ottó Herman. According to him the study of the contemporary fishing techniques was important because of their alleged links to a gradually disappearing autochthonous—and above all—ethnic Hungarian fishing culture. Most of the objects that were drawn and commented upon in his *A magyar halászat könyve* [*The book of Hungarian fishing*] could be found both at the 1885 national and the 1896 millennial exhibition. So these objects were already ethnicized and associated with the theory of the autochthonous Hungarian character of fishing. Moreover, the symbolic content associated to the objects determined both their separate place in the taxonomy of the National Ethnographic Museum and shaped the interest of the ethnographic discipline in objects of fishing.

The establishment of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society and of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography took place in the framework of a profession-

9 Jankó (1989), p. 12.

10 Jankó (2002).

alization process that not only asserted the discipline by developing its institutional mechanisms, but also inscribed rivalling values and narratives of nation and ethnicity. The shift from the editions of folklore texts to the gathering of ethnographic objects brought to the forefront of an emerging discipline visual narratives about community and nationhood.

NATION IN-THE-MAKING. A HIDDEN TRADITION OF HUNGARIAN ETHNOGRAPHY: THE “TOURIST NETWORK”

Till the mid-19th century, Hungarian travel writing was almost exclusively a privilege of the literate. Travelogues were intimately linked to social status and literary knowledge, and often their writer had never visited the places he or she wrote about. But even if the writer did visit them, the travelogue was still due to act upon complex poetical rules: it was supposed to be the proof of scholarly erudition. That is why travelogues and travel representations were linked less to the empirical experiences of one's travel, but to a scholarly work of reading and compiling sources about the scenes of the travel. During the 19th century the availability of new means of travel, the reform of the train system in the 1870–1880s, the new division of time (and the reconceptualization of leisure) all led to the democratization of travel and travel writing. The struggles between the different forms of travel and travel representations were already present in a debate of the early 1850s when the *Encyclopaedia of Recent Knowledge* published a headword dedicated to “tourists.” Otherwise the encyclopaedia did not contain any headword on travel or travel writing; this was a sign of the highly domesticated nature of traditional travel accounts. The way travel accounts should be written did not constitute recent knowledge—their rules and regulations ran in the blood, they needed not to be reinforced. The “recent” exception was the one that was to be made clear: according to the *Encyclopaedia of Recent Knowledge*, being a tourist was an irregular way to be a traveler. The passage dedicated to tourism and to those having a passion for this kind of travel, implicitly distinguished “good” travel from “bad” travel, including the accounts of these types of travels.

According to the headword, “tourists” were those travelers who traveled without any clear aim (including that of educating themselves and others). They traveled exclusively for the sake of traveling and did not follow the well-known rules of things to be seen and heard. In this sense, their travel accounts

leaned too much on their own perspectives, giving an exaggeratedly personal account of the travel:

Tourists. That is the name for an unusual category of recent travelers. The name and the concept has English roots since "going on the Great Tour" is one of the demands regarding gentlemanlike behaviour. The real *tourist* differs from the other travelers in having no precise aim (for instance, a scientific one), traveling for the sake of traveling. It is needed that the traveler should give evidence of fine education in his or her habits, clothing and views, and to be excessively subjective in his or her manner of presentation. That is why the interesting nature of the travelogue depends entirely on the personality of the tourist. Usually the accounts of the tourists are to be counted amongst the light and entertaining readings, since they lack the core of the matters present in other travelers' texts.¹¹

The travels and texts termed and described by the *Encyclopaedia of Recent Knowledge* under the headword of "tourism" signalled (of course, negatively at that time) a new paradigm in Hungarian travel conception and textual representation of travels. They were the first to witness the gaze of the *curious* traveler, the tourist, but they also spoke about the institutionalization of tourism practices and the nature of these institutions, respectively their uses. The new phenomenon concerned a ceaselessly growing number of people and a great variety of social groups. That is why different ideologies and institutions perceived it as an excellent opportunity to gain audience, popularity and status. Also, the old and the new disciplines took notice of the phenomenon, because it could legitimate their social role. But it was the emerging Hungarian ethnography that benefited especially from its connections with the touristic movement.¹²

From the 1870s onwards the new travelers organized themselves into a series of touristic associations. They were based mainly on social, occupational or regional/local identities and, when listing their aims, they hardly ever touched upon didactical, national, etc. purposes. The only double-edged aim was the linking of tourism to physical and mental health, and specifically mountain climbing with manhood and gentlemanlike qualities. Of course,

11 Pákh, Albert, (ed.), *Újabbkori Ismeretek Tára. Tudományok s politikai és társas élet encyclopaediája VI.* Budapest: Heckenast Gusztáv, 1855, p. 368.

12 On the history and ideological uses of tourism, see especially Clifford (1992); Clifford (1997); Royek (1993); Royek – Urry (1997).

these discourses were often permeated with ideas of social order and hierarchy, but they lacked those traces that brought to the foreground the ideologies of the national while linking ethnography with tourism. One of the institutions that stood at the beginning of this process—and implicitly framed most of the other associations—was the Hungarian Carpathian Association. Like most of these associations, they had also a separate newspaper, entitled *Turista Lapok* [*Newspaper of Tourists*]. The programmatic essays and news published in it from the mid-1880s onward, as well as the texts republished in the scholarly journal *Ethnographia* (the first Hungarian journal of the scholarly ethnographical establishment) defined tourism as a telic activity that was closely linked to the study of the people (*népisme* in Hungarian). Moreover, one of the prominent ethnographers of the age, university professor of ethnography at the University of Kolozsvár (Cluj), Antal Herrmann, defined tourism in his *Tourism and ethnography* (which served as a kind of introduction for *Ethnographia*) as follows: “The land is interesting for us first and foremost as the dwelling-place of the people. [...] Tourism should take people as intimately bound to the land. The tourist is not a misanthrope. Never think of him as of somebody that flees from his fellows to the nature. And how enthralling are the people living on Nature’s bosom! How refreshing are the meetings with them *if we can handle them*. Getting to know the people can be refreshing for a tourist. [...] So, when meeting people, tourists are actually acting hand in hand with ethnographers.”¹³ When defining tourism along with ethnography, Herrmann was inscribing a strong ideological aim into the different favorite social practices of recreation of the time. From this angle tourism was not an aimless travel, but an alleged acting out of one’s belonging to a national community.

What we clearly witness is the way different types of knowledge forms were transformed through their contamination with the discourse and thinking about the folk, and, on the other hand, this sheds light to a possible content of the institutionalization of the folklore studies. It seems that these folklore studies used the immensely popular touristic activities and movements to gain a wider quasi-scientific community around a discipline having still an indefinite status in the 1880s–1890s. Actually, it was such a kind of tourist associa-

13 Herrmann (1891), pp. 16–17 [italics mine – L. T. Sz.]. For other sources from Antal Herrmann, especially relevant in connecting the Hungarian touristic movement with early Hungarian ethnography, see Herrmann (1889); Herrmann (1890); Herrmann (1892); Herrmann (1894); Herrmann (1896); Herrmann (1897); Herrmann (1898); Herrmann (1898a); Herrmann (1899); Herrmann (1900).

tion—the Transylvanian Tourist Association—that proposed the inclusion of ethnography into the university curriculum for the first time. In an official public letter greeting the appointment of Antal Herrmann to the newly established ethnographic chair of the University of Kolozsvár (Cluj), the Association urged the newly appointed professor to represent their “noble and national” aims.¹⁴

A clear sign of a stronger ideological impetus from the side of ethnography (and mostly from those ethnographers that had leading roles in the national touristic associations, like János Jankó or Antal Herrmann) was the fact that the major touristic review of the time established a supplement dedicated exclusively to the ethnographic goals of tourism and to the way that simple tourists should prepare themselves to be helpful to institutional ethnography. The supplement was entitled *Erdély Népei* [*The Folks of Transylvania*]. At the same time, the very same association created a separate section for educators mainly with the aim of emphasizing the ethnographic character of tourism, linking travel and ideologies of health to ethnography—and thus establishing a powerful support for a new discipline *vis-à-vis* old or new rivals, like literature, history or sociology. It was therefore of no surprise that educators were addressed in the following way: “Probably every school-master and school-mistress is aware of the fact that espousing tourism is not only a favour, but their duty at the same time.”¹⁵ In this framework being a “simple,” “humble” “aimless” tourist came to be an increasingly despised possibility: “Those making a pleasure trip and calling themselves tourists—while they look out from the windows of their extra railway carriages—are immensely far from real tourists,”¹⁶ commented a leading scholar on them. The nationalization of tourism by the emerging ethnographic studies came to reposition the cultures of travel within different types of discourses about the national, but on the other hand, the process shed light on the strong premises the emerging new discipline had around the last decades of 19th-century Hungary. One of these premises was linked to the ethnographic object as a commodity. The touristic culture attributed an economic value to the ethnographic objects, and this new value was used and reworked by the touristic associations into an economic narrative about the role of ethnography in economic nation-building.

14 Herrmann (1898), pp. 20–21.

15 Moussong (1893), p. 44.

16 Rodiczky (1890), p. 68.

REWORKING AND PRODUCING THE DIFFERENCE: THE ECONOMY OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECT AND THE NOVEL ETHNOGRAPHIC VISION OF MODERNIZATION

It was in the 1880s that the vocabulary of economy began to permeate the ethnographic culture. This was the period when various regional and national exhibitions of arts and crafts offered also samples of ethnographic objects produced by the “domestic industry.” The 1879 exhibition at Székesfehérvár was the first to display the cottage industry within the framework of hands-and-crafts products and this did not occur by accident: the recently established Society for Domestic Industry and the Development of Industry (*Erdélyi Háziipar és Iparfejlesztő Egylet*) took care of the presence of the domestic crafts and arts workshop producing exclusively toys—a similarly new institution founded in Kalotaszeg and born out of a deep economic crisis.¹⁷ The 1887 arts and crafts exhibition picturing the ethnographic culture of Hungary through 15 rooms also emphasized domestic industry. In the room dedicated to the ethnography of Kalotaszeg, it portrayed not only customs from the region, but also the carving of toys. This implicitly advertized the local workshop that had begun producing toys. The immense success of the room for Kalotaszeg pushed the workshop to produce not only toys, but costumes, embroideries, *varrottas* and pottery from Kalotaszeg. Through their presence at these exhibitions the ethnographic objects became part of discussions on the possibilities of a new national economic boom. As count Jenő Zichy, the organizer of this and several other exhibitions wrote: a prosperous national economy can be achieved only if consumers stick to the commodities that have been produced within the country.¹⁸ This protectionism soon became a favourite idea of the touristic associations,¹⁹ and since *the protection* of the

17 The building of the regional railway-network between Kalotaszeg and Nagyvárad (Oradea) left the local population without its main source of income deriving from transportation. Cf. György Kövér, *Iparosodás agrárországban. Magyarország gazdaságtörténete 1848–1914*. [The economic history of Hungary 1848–1914]. Budapest: Gondolat Publishing House, 1982.

18 Zichy (1880), pp. 7, 19, 21.

19 The issue was lambasted even in the parliamentary debates of the time. For instance, one of the leaders of the opposition, Albert Apponyi became an ardent protector of the idea: “He [...] confronted the Parliament with the idea that the folk populace of Hungary are actually a hidden source of the fitness to work. Espoused and protected, the domestic forms of industry

national had been an essential part of the politics of ethnography already before the 1880s, ethnographic objects were embedded fairly smoothly into this economic narrative in the long run.

These successes were reworked by the touristic associations into an economic narrative about the role of ethnography. The commercial uses of the ethnographic commodity, the potential economic value of the ethnographic objects came to be a part of their vocabulary, but in a very peculiar way. As one of the executive officers (and the chief one for the study of national dress) of the national touristic congress planned to be part of the Hungarian millennial celebrations, Antal Herrmann prepared a highly elaborate plan regarding national costumes. He began his proposals by recommending to all the tourist associations "to include into their programs—unless they had done so already—the observation and presentation of the folk, the collection of ethnographic objects and the establishing of ethnographic museums." He went on to give grounds for his scholarly position: "It is not only the heritage of the word and the belief that are visibly disappearing among our rural population, but also their proper, picturesque and economically important dress is changing. [...] The maintenance of the latter is significant for several reasons"—he argued and mentioned the economic goal as the top priority. The economic factor came into sight also in his action plan when he proposed that "the tourists should favour the domestic industry of the folk, and especially its clothing aspect [...] This action could be a starting point for broader nationwide movements that would aim at making the folkish popular in all fields of everyday life, be it articles for personal use, mores, literature, arts and society [...] This would hugely contribute to the development of our national output and industrial life, it would make the nation wealthy, powerful and independent."²⁰

In the 1840s–1870s Hungarian texts fiercely opposed the notion of the ethnographic primitive to that of the civilized: they represented the folk as the depository of ancient values that had been "tragically" "fading out" with the advent of modernity. Modernity was thus portrayed in these preparadigmatic texts of mid-19th-century Hungarian ethnography as the past and present peril of the nation. This was one of the reasons why the stigmatization of modernity (including and represented also by industrial progress) was so frequent in these texts. As we saw, from the 1870s onwards the touristic associations

could further the economic well-being of the folk." (*Vasárnapi Újság* 1879, p. 33). The role of the state in taking the initiative cannot be neglected.

20 Herrmann (1896), p. 89.

viewed the “primitive” folk culture as the main element in reviving national economy through industrial-sized handicraftsmanship, and thus also the engine behind the possibility of an organic rebirth and modernization of the allegedly destroyed character of the nation. The ethnographic objects as commodities became part of a reconfigured narrative about the relationship between the ethnographic primitive and modernity: “We know quite well that the tourists enthralled and refreshed by the beauties of nature are highly responsive to the primitive, but original folk objects, the so-called souvenirs. [...] Let us naturalize this foreign habit used extensively by others: let us offer the maidenly primitive objects of our handicraft industry to the tourists. [...] If there is anyone among you that was ever in Stockholm you should know that the Swedes are mastering this really well: we should follow them and we’ll make our economy grow.”²¹ Gyula Merza even imagined a special sort of ethnographic movement in order to transform the “simple” ethnographic object into a marketable commodity, and to make the folk sensitive to this difference, forcing them to produce this new type of commodity: “We should make the folk attentive to those peculiarities that can arise the interest of the foreigners or the tourists. [For instance, the] organization of a Transylvanian competition of folk costumes could really focus the attention of the foreigners to our land.”²² Etelka Gyarmathy, one of the founders of the ethnographic arts and crafts movement spoke about the latest huge Western European successes of the Transylvanian handicrafts based on ethnographic objects: “Bánffy-Hunyad, this small town of Kalotaszeg sets the standards of the latest fashion in Paris. It is this small town that establishes what is in vogue regarding kerchiefs, hats, *varrottas*, all kinds of embroideries for underwear.”²³ The very idea of the “primitive” ethnographic commodity being in vogue or setting the latest trends in fashion assigned the alleged primitiveness of the folk a central role in the modern trends. The emphasis laid on the Western European reception and economic successes of the Kalotaszeg workshops made some commentators portray the “primitiveness” of the Transylvanian ethnographic objects as the first successful attempts of the Transylvanians to be even more modern than the Western Europeans. This new image of modernity based on and intimately interwoven with (and not opposed to) the primitiveness of the folk was radically different from the narrative that viewed ethnographic texts

21 “A házi és népipar turista szempontból [Handicrafts from the perspective of tourism],” *Erdély*, January 1901, pp. 5–6.

22 Merza (1898), p. 16.

23 Etelka Gyarmathy in 1887, quoted in Herrmann (1896), p. 89.

and objects as repositories of ancient national values not destroyed by modernity. This situation made the emerging ethnography portray itself as the national discipline that successfully fused the ancient and the modern. Ethnography could represent itself as both a major discipline of the national heritage and the drive behind a possible economic revival after the economic crisis of the early 1870s.

In the 1870s–1880s this whole framework was linked almost exclusively to Transylvania. For instance, in one of the 1893 issues of the review *Erdély*, József Sztérényi focused on the relationship between “public economy” and “tourism,” suggesting that ethnographic sights were the main driving forces behind the Hungarian national economy. He also imagined a future economic priority for Transylvania. The marketing of the Transylvanian exotic and primevalness thus tacitly touched upon an alleged hierarchy of the regions within the Hungarian nation-building process.²⁴ It was exactly in this spirit that the link between the Transylvanian ethnographic objects, tourism as their economic utilizer and the national economy was made in several ethnographic essays. According to the introduction of *Erdély*, that set the goals for the review and the Transylvanian touristic movement: “This realm of the country has specific interests that derive from its special place and history [...] the Transylvanian Carpathian Society [should] preach the beauties of this part of the country and make them useful not only for the individual spirit, but also regarding the national economy.”²⁵ So the new ethnographic attitude towards industry, industrialization, economic growth, economic market not only harmonized the national narrative with economic development, but was an answer to the question as to whether economic progress and the national could be harmonized. This ethnographic narrative was also part of an interesting version of nation-building. It constituted a part of a series of complex attempts to represent the relationships between Transylvania and Hungary, but it also brought to the forefront the novel answer Transylvanian Hungarian elite was trying to give regarding its own roles in Hungary and the empire.

24 Sztérényi (1893), p. 274.

25 “Olvasóinkhoz” [To our readers], *Erdély* 1890, p. 1.

TOWARDS A *FIN-DE-SIÈCLE* TRANSYLVANIAN ETHNOGRAPHY? THE POLITICS OF THE ESTABLISHING OF THE KOLOZSVÁR (CLUJ) MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY

TRANSLATING THE “WESTERN” EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE:
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE NATIONAL
ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM NARRATIVE OF THE WEST

The Hungarian ethnographic museum conceptions of the 1890s and the models that were commented and debated both in Hungary and in Transylvania could lead us to the roles Transylvanian ethnography was playing in *fin-de-siècle* national identity debates. I have already brought to the forefront the way Hungarian museum politics worked from the “visual turn” onwards. I have spoken mostly of the reworking of the ethnological museum and the way different conceptions of the national overlapped and struggled in the exhibitions and at the first national permanent exhibition of 1898. It is nonetheless essential to have a deeper look at the way the issue of the ethnographic museum was perceived in the Transylvanian context due mostly to the Transylvanian Carpathian Association, first only a branch of the Hungarian Carpathian Association, then its rival with different aims.

Exactly in the years when the establishing of the first permanent “national” exhibition took place, a fierce debate arose within the Transylvanian touristic movement upon the models of the Transylvanian museum to be established and its theoretical orientation *vis-à-vis* the Budapest-based museum and its national character. One of the most comprehensive essays written about the issue projected a clear-cut cleavage between the ethnological and the ethnographic way of exhibiting cultures. Its author, Gyula Merza began his Western European museum travelogue by dividing a strong line and creating a dichotomic taxonomy (instead of a more *laissez-faire* type which would have allowed also the mixed versions): “Ethnographic museums can be grouped into two types of institutions: those that exhibit all types of people in different rooms or sections and those which are targeting the exhibition of a sole nation or ethnic group [*népelem*].”²⁶ Merza was extremely confident that the future Transylvanian ethnographic museum of Kolozsvár (Cluj) should and would aim only at the latter possibility.

26 Merza (1899), p. 49.

Merza stressed the experiences of his stay in Berlin according to the same logic. He reported of the Museum of German Domestic Industry and National Costumes that he strayed upon with huge interest, since it served solely "German national [!] ethnography from 1889 onward." When he spoke about his visit to the ethnographic museum of Leipzig, this was again not entirely separate from his present Transylvanian experiences and his future agenda of establishing a museum that would be not only national, but would also emphasize the strong bonds between tourism and ethnography. It was this institution that—according to Merza—joined ethnography with tourism and took the liberty of bringing together ethnographic objects and "art works taken and drawn after nature, i.e., paintings, drawings, panoramas, geographic photos and maps."²⁷ He clearly alluded to the Transylvanian situation of the intimate relationship of tourism and ethnography, and constructed a Western canon for the legitimization of this bond in museal representation when he went on to Scandinavian examples:

Even though they are situated rather unfavourably, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Denmark, Gronland, Iceland, Norway and Lappland have museums that bring to the foreground all the various signs of life of the far Northern Europe.

The Nordiska Muset that was formerly called Scandinavian Ethnographic Museum owes its being to Dr Hazelius Arthur. Originally it was founded in 1872 to protect the Swedish folk culture from the pathological changes due to the changed traffic.

Merza was enthralled by the interiors exhibited and divided according to regions, represented by means of lifesize dolls. Even though he did not elaborate upon the issue, he seemed surprised that "the museum actually consisted of two distinct parts: the folk museum and the collection about the higher classes." Probably that is why he called it a museum of the history of culture—even though he considered the "folk part" of the institution exemplary for Transylvania.

His fascination with the open spaces where the mores and customs of "the people" could be learned found a natural goal in the zoo and the Skansen: he reported on the *Djugarden*, the zoo built in this spirit, emphasizing the circumstance that "the foreigner who visited Stockholm could learn about the

27 Merza (1898), p. 49.

whole Swedish people: how they used to live and work, but also how they enjoyed themselves in the present. On holidays and weekends the zoo was a crowded ethnographic museum, with presentations of folk dances and customs in the Skansen. All of this was happening to the background of the common people that arrived to the capital city and were dressed in their traditional cloths, enthralling our attention.”²⁸ When his systematic survey of Northern European museum traditions and types touched also upon Denmark and the Dansk Folkemuseum that “brought together all [!] the ethnographic objects” of the Danish people, he was probably referring not to a quantitative totality of the objects, but the systematic character, a kind of qualitative, representative totality of the exhibition, and at the same time he was tacitly setting the standards and the models for the exhibition in Kolozsvár (Cluj). When he emphasized the existence of a special and separate museum for domestic carving culture, probably he was hinting at the Kalotaszeg antecedents.

His conclusion was clearly a plea in favour of a distinct type of museum. Although he met not only museums of national ethnography (exhibiting the ethnographies of their own cultures), he definitely translated his German, Czech, but mostly Scandinavian experiences in a peculiar way. This West-East (or to be more specific, Northern-Eastern) type of transfer of knowledge about the exhibitionary culture of ethnographic commodities was subtly biased towards a Transylvanian ethnographic museum overemphasizing the “national” elements. It looked for Western models that underlined and legitimated this, and concealed or even removed the ethnological elements of the museum culture he had met: “[...] in Scandinavia it is the national ethnography (including village dwelling places, clothing and other objects) that is valued and appreciated both by the king and the nation.”²⁹

It is useful to position Merza’s Western and Northern European survey on the national character of the museums of these realms in the context of the opinion of his fellow scholar, the first director of the ethnographic museum. In 1897 (and even in 1898 when the permanent exhibition was opened), János Jankó, the well-read and scholarly established young director of the ethnographic section decided to participate in the continuation of the so-called Zichy project. His scholarly travel was not direct and straightforward to Russia, but led through Berlin and Finland with the clear aim of cataloguing and interpreting the Finno-Ugric objects gathered in several Western and

²⁸ *Idem.*, p. 52.

²⁹ *Ibidem.*

Northern museums. This was the occasion (and of course, probably the unavoidable comparison with the state of the art in matters of Hungarian ethnographic museology) when and why he commented upon the Northern museums in several papers that have been only recently published.³⁰ Jankó touched upon the same reasons for establishing the museums that Merza did, and stressed the same idea of a wide social touristic movement that Merza praised. He saw a technically well-organized museum culture that abounded in objects regarding the Finno-Ugrians, and which allegedly shed clearer light on the historical object culture of the Hungarians. While important figures of Hungarian ethnography offered interpretations of the Western and Northern museums and modelled the new ethnographic museum of Budapest accordingly, well-known figures of the Transylvanian Hungarian touristic association formulated their wish for a separate and independent Transylvanian museum by translating and reworking the premises of the Museum of Ethnography of Budapest. This pointed to a somewhat independent Transylvanian ethnographic establishment with a partly separate agenda. The premises of ethnography used for establishing the Ethnographic Museum of Kolozsvár (Cluj) were partly different from those seen in the case of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography.

TRANSYLVANIAN ETHNOGRAPHY: THE SOURCE AND CAUSE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF "DOUBLE-TALK" OF THE NATIONAL?

The existence of this partly double (Hungarian-Transylvanian) framework of Hungarian ethnography could be seen by the way some well-known Hungarian ethnographers of the time acted in a curiously different way and employed different vocabulary in the Hungarian and in the Transylvanian context. For instance, those ethnographers (like Jankó and Herrmann) who behaved in a certain way in a Budapest milieu, acted in a different way in the Transylvanian context. While having written a very up-to-date, professional and detached monograph on Kalotaszeg, focusing on the material culture of the region, János Jankó used the vocabulary of the Transylvanian Carpathian Society on

30 Jankó (1893). See especially the chapters entitled *Néprajzi múzeumok Finnországban* [Ethnographic museums in Finland] and *A finn néprajzi múzeum tipológiai csoportjai és sorozatai Helsinkiben* [The typological groups and series of the Finnish Ethnographical Museum] in Jankó (1893), pp. 47–73, 74–146.

the occasion of his lectures held in local communities: "It is a most urgent task to collect the whole of Hungarian ethnography, so as we could save and revive all that is truly Hungarian in the Hungarian. This should happen as soon as possible till the culture absorbs even the virgin territories and thus it nips the development of the national character in its bud." Jankó did not stop here and this made his position so intriguing. The young scholar went on alluding to the peculiar place he was offering to the Transylvanians in his mental construction of cultural decay in which ethnography played the part of the saviour discipline that would regain the fading and corrupted national character of the Hungarians: "Ladies and gentlemen, please, have a look at the map of contemporary Hungary and all of you will see—what we all painfully feel—that the people of our country are too colorful. The Hungarians are crowded homogeneously mainly on Alföld and Dunántúl. But this homogeneous unity has already been corroded by the ethnic groups, they are eating it up step by step. [...] This [process] will give us strength for our national fight, which—especially for the Hungarians from Transylvania—is the struggle for life."³¹ Jankó's assertions were characteristic to the premises that characterized the Transylvanian Hungarian touristic association: for instance, Dezső Radnóti, its highly influential member reckoned his society was a peculiar one among all the other similar groups. According to him it represented "the vital issue" of "winning over the citizens speaking a language other than Hungarian to the spirit of the national state."³² Similarly, when the local councillors visit the newly-established ethnographic museum in 1902, the president of the Transylvanian touristic society sketched not only the hardships of the gathering process of the ethnographic objects, but he also spoke highly about the alleged individuality of the Ethnographic Museum of Kolozsvár (Cluj): "Concerning its character, this museum is unique because it entails only the objects of a single region. The similar foreign museums are colonial, the character of the ethnographic museum in Budapest is too international and cosmopolitan."³³ When the president was defining the peculiar character of the local ethnographic museum in comparison to an alleged Western and Budapest model, he used an Occidentalist argument: he translated the values of the ethnographic museum of Budapest as being Western, non-national and undesirable.

³¹ Jankó (1892), pp. 117, 122–123.

³² Radnóti (1894), p. 341.

³³ "Kolozsvár törvényhatósága a múzeumban" [The officials of Kolozsvár (Cluj) in the museum], *Erdély* 1903, pp. 45, 46.

So, this ideal of a Transylvanian ethnography that had different functions from the "general" Hungarian one was already at the foundations of the idea of a separate ethnographic Transylvanian museum. Antal Herrmann, in one of his first proposals, had already put forward the rationale of a museum that not only presented, but also re-presented, suggested and projected interethnic relationships, including the socialization of the different social and ethnic communities regarding their relationship with the Hungarian political nation. He wrote: "In Transylvania there has been for a long time what one could term ethnographic common knowledge [*köztudat*]. And it is only Transylvania that has monographic ethnographic literature.³⁴ [After the ethnographic initiatives of the Saxons and the Romanians] there are only the Hungarians left—their supremacy obliges them to gain a leading role in ethnographic research of all the ethnic groups populating this area [*hazarész*]."³⁵ This was the premise on which he founded his claim for "a Transylvanian general Carpathian Museum in Kolozsvár [Cluj], with a special regard to the touristic and ethnographic relationships." The building he thought to be the most fit for the functions of an ethnographic museum was not a neutral place: "[The best place for it] would be the birthplace of King Mátyás that has been consecrated by the national feeling"³⁶ The opening of the museum was not neutral either: it coincided with the similarly ceremonial erection of the statue of King Mátyás. In fact, they were viewed both by the organizers, and by the participants as two constituent parts of the same event. That is why the grand opening of the museum was perceived also as a kind of symbolic appropriation, *magyarization* of the Transylvanian space. Even though the vocabulary of the opening ceremony often returned to the language of an imperial patriotism (due to the presence and patronage of Prince József Ágost), there was a strong discourse emphasizing the common origin, and implicitly excluding those groups that could not be subsumed under this criterion: "Let us unfold the flag of our society here, in this place, in the house of birth of our beloved Corvin Mátyás, and promise to triumphantly go around the whole Transylvania where everlasting beauties of the nature, overt or hidden treasures, fights gained or lost are calling us and make us love the earth that had been gained by our Fathers [!] with their blood."³⁷ Due to the presence of the imperial prince, the opening

34 He was probably referring to János Jankó's monograph on Kalotaszeg, the first systematic work dedicated to an ethnographic region in Hungarian ethnography.

35 Herrmann (1898), p. 14.

36 *Ibidem*.

37 "Az Erzsébet-zászló felavatása," *Erdély*, nos. 9–12, 1902.

speech of the museum, delivered by baron Arthur Feilitzsch, played subtly on two possible meanings of what or who was exhibited, and whose cultural progress should the visitor grasp along the exhibition: “[...] our museum is meant to bring the foreigner to us, to offer material for the scholars and to prove our cultural progress and civilization.”³⁸ For the representative of the emperor and in the context of an imperial nationalism the speech probably hinted at Transylvania as being part of the empire and its civilization. For the members of the local Hungarian touristic association, it was a speech on the cultural superiority both of the Transylvanians in general, and of the Hungarians in particular.

The opening of the Ethnographic Museum of Kolozsvár (Cluj), (and the beginning of the local ethnographic university studies also in 1902) made visible different, struggling identity models and options. The ceremony used and sometimes translated imperial patriotism in view of the presence of the members of the imperial family. This type of discourse implied a *double (or even triple) loyalty* to the empire, the state and the local community; its recurrent cognitive metaphor was Switzerland. The *Romanians* and *the folk* appeared in it as the subjects of a civilizing process: “we should civilize them so as they could understand and appropriate this loyalty.” It was intertwined with economic arguments: for example, this type of loyalty was seen to assure peace and thus economic well-being. *Tolerance* was a recurrent concept of the framework in the sense of accepting the (ethnic or social) otherness in change of the double/triple loyalty (“we are inviting you and taking you as you are in exchange for your loyalty to the region, state and/or empire”).

The other identity option present in the speeches reworked the former model into an exclusivist ethnocultural framework. This implied loyalty to the state (and sometimes to the region), and this loyalty was measured by language differences. It was again intertwined with economic arguments: in such types of narratives this type of loyalty assured a homogeneous and sure economic well-being (with)in the state. *Tolerance* was again a recurrent concept here, but having another logic than in the former case: “we are tolerant, because we are inviting you to join the community, we don’t exclude you—but if you don’t master the language, you are excluding yourselves, because this equals the fact that you don’t wish to become a loyal member of the community.”

38 *Idem.*

But the visual logic of the exhibition was a significant sign that the latter narrative was embedded into the logic of the selection and organization of the folk objects, and representations of the folk and the land. This narrative was peculiar since both the Romanians and the Saxons withdrew from the preliminary discussions on the museum, but on the other hand, they both withdrew because of the tendency of the narrative that would unfold. So it was both a cause and a consequence of this situation that the museum was organized according to the following logic, as reported by the annual detailed accounts of the touristic society: "The museum takes up 12 rooms of the birth-place of King Mátyás. The far left room of the ground floor contains the library of the society [...] The nearby room is closed and used as a store room for the identical objects. The left room is the first to open the exhibition: it is the room where our king was born and exhibits historical [Transylvanian] objects like the skirt of Brandenburgi Katalin, the church chairs of Mihály Apaffy [...] together with the flag of our society. The next rooms are at the disposal of the balneological section [...] The whole upper floor and all the corridors are taken by the ethnographic section according to the following rationale: 1) several types of *varrotas*; 2) a traditional room from Kalotaszeg; 3) a traditional kitchen from Kalotaszeg; 4) weaving and spinning; 5) domestic clay industry; 6) ancient trades (hunting, fishing, shepherd activities); 7) agriculture."³⁹

While the museum grasped the logic and the model of the Hungarian Ethnographic Museum, it also rewrote this "Western" tradition by submitting its own central ethnographic loci and the objects characteristic to them. By this gesture the new exhibitionary space was made both to complete and broaden, but also to rival the Hungarian ethnographic scene offered in the museum of Budapest. The ethnography shown here attributed a strong exclusivist ethnic character to itself and spoke about its role in strong metaphors of ethnic struggle: "One could say that Transylvania, the classical land of national self-preservation in the past, is still an undiscovered realm not only for the foreigners, but also for us. It is its rediscovery our society is aiming at: the Transylvanian Carpathian Society attempts to lead this region back to the united bosom of the Hungarian state, since it is this part of the country upon which the fate of the whole nation and state rests. If it falls, the nation will fall, too."⁴⁰

39 "A választmány éves jelentése" [The annual report of the association], *Erdély*, 1902, p. 54. Also cf. Semayer (1902), pp. 141–149.

40 "Erdélyi útikalauz. Előfőzetési felhívás" [Guide to Transylvania], *Erdély*, nos. 1–4, 1899.

This central role in an alleged ethnic fight attributed to Transylvanian ethnography could explain the centrality of the emerging discipline among all the other humanistic and social disciplines of the new disciplinary system. According to the taxonomy of the Transylvanian Ethnographic Museum: “[A]ll the objects exhibited can be divided into two separate groups: the proper ethnographic part includes folk architecture, interiors, clothing and embroidery, working tools, folk customs, folkish [*népies*] literature [!], music, dance and finally sociology [!]. The second group comprises *the complementary sciences of ethnography, i.e. geography, anthropology, demography and linguistics (dealing with the language of the folk).*”⁴¹

The exhibition placed non-Hungarian to a peripheral position. The only representations of non-Hungarian inhabitants of Transylvania were the visual ones, respectively some Romanian-painted sacred pictures in the antechamber along with “Szekler glass paintings of a much better quality.” They were placed outside the core of the main exhibition, in a narrative sequence that was evaluating them and this evaluation did not turn out to be favourable to them. Almost all the industrial-quality objects were Hungarian ones, and in the logic of the exhibition they became master examples of technical progress. This was reinforced by one of the detailed newspaper descriptions of the ethnographic museum: “The aim of this collection is to bring together all the commonly used objects of all the people that populate the historically and naturally bordered territory of Transylvania. They speak different languages and are at *different levels of civilization.*”⁴² Due to the strong impact of the Transylvanian Carpathian Society the image of Kolozsvár (Cluj) as the new ethnographic capital became intimately interwoven with a strong exclusivist ethnic character and the overemphasizing of the role of ethnography in bringing Transylvania and the Transylvanian Hungarian to the forefront of Hungarian nation-building: “The foreigner would obtain a comprehensive and impressive image of the land by means of a well-organized Transylvanian ethnographic museum. This latter could help them to compile an accurate tour guide that overlaps what they wish to see: one can immediately learn what is worth seeing. But it is also through the museum that our fellow countrymen [*honfitársaink*] [i.e., both the Hungarians from Hungary and the ethnic groups from Transylvania] will finally be able to encounter this land of dreams [*tündérkert*], this most beautiful creature of God, so they can actually learn about the nation and

41 Merza (1899a), p. 15 [emphasis mine – L. T. Sz.].

42 Hankó (1902), p. 80 [emphasis mine – L. T. Sz.].

their place in it. This is the real and fundamental condition of the improvement of the individual and of the folk. [...] This special function would make the town [i.e., Kolozsvár (Cluj)] the main spot and milestone of Transylvanian tourism, and an ethnographic capital."⁴³

Transylvanian ethnography claimed a central and unifying disciplinary role to itself that was unprecedented for Hungarian ethnography. This is so, since the discursive field surrounding it saw it to fulfil allegedly special ("social") tasks. Due to the perception of these special tasks it came to rival the Hungarian model and to rewrite the configuration of Hungarian nation-building.

CONCLUSIONS

The Hungarian ethnographic discipline, that emerged in the second half of 19th century out of the restructured traditional literary system, broadened and partly shifted its disciplinary interest from the folklore texts to the objects of "the folk" from the 1870s onwards. This went hand in hand with the discovery, exploration and remaking of the contemporary immensely popular visual narratives of the national. The presence of ethnographic narratives at the international, national and regional exhibitions, and in the recently established public museums was not only a mere fascination with the emerging discipline with the visual, but also a constitutive part of the representational politics of early ethnography. That is why the different ethnographic exhibitions and the establishment of the different Hungarian ethnographic museums became a battlefield of the struggling versions of the national.⁴⁴

43 *Ibidem*. In a contemporary biography of József Sándor, the founder of the Transylvanian Cultural Society of the Hungarians, and one of the founders of the Transylvanian Carpathian Society, the writer concluded somewhat surprisingly after a seemingly innocent beginning: "The drive behind his scholarly activities was the ethnic question, about which he had always made interesting declarations. He emphasized that he was a true friend of Romania, which he considered a huge ally of our homeland and nation against Slavism, but the only condition of this alliance was that they [i.e., Romanians] should leave Transylvania alone." Regarding the debates with the Saxons, see *Deutsches Tageblatt* 1894, p. 6219, *Kronstadter Zeitung* 1894, p. 133.

44 Just like 19th-century Eastern European national characterology, also 19th-century Hungarian ethnographic museum-making was the battleground of the competing projects of "defending the local tradition" and "importing institutions from the West." For the specific clusters and configurations of the former process, see Balázs Trencsényi's paper in this volume.

Tourism played a strong role in these debates, and influenced the way they were shaping the emerging ethnographic discipline. Preparadigmatic and early professional ethnography discovered the touristic phenomenon during its search to find a wider (a "national") audience that would strengthen its social role and position as the alleged national discipline. The large number of people practicing different forms of tourism became a fertile ground for professional ethnographers that established many institutional and ideological links between their discipline and touristic practices. But the internal cleavage between the Budapest-based Hungarian Carpathian Society (that geographically focused mainly on the Tatras) and the Transylvanian Carpathian Society brought to the forefront the cleavages inside the different ethnographies of the national within the emerging discipline. One of the most spectacular terrains of these cleavages was the way they perceived, used, and reconfigured Western models of the ethnographic museum. Positioning themselves and each other to "Western modernity" in divergent forms, they imagined rather different immediate tasks for the new discipline. The different routes of interpreting the Western models split the emerging Hungarian ethnography into rivaling values and narratives towards the conceptions of the national, and signalled divergent answers of the alleged discipline of the national towards modernity, giving different answers to the *fin-de-siècle* question of whether the national and the modern could be harmonized.

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WHO ARE THE BULGARIANS?

"Race," science and politics in fin-de-siècle Bulgaria

STEFAN DETCHEV

In national ideologies and definition of the nations, the issues of "race" and ethnicity were in many cases central ones. In the 19th century the emerging national consciousness in many cases received rational shape through a scientific revolution. At that time nationalism was, in fact, the driving force behind "racial" differentiation. In the scientific investigations one obvious area was that of "race," which often had political objectives as an attempt to assert the existence of a national identity based on innate "racial" characteristics. As Barkan emphasizes, the intensification of national rivalry in Europe in the latter part of the 19th century stimulated pursuit of still greater "racial" differentiation as a mode of justifying nationalism that was sanctioned by the growing repute of biology and evolutionary theory.¹ Part of this process of constructing national ideologies in the 19th century was the search for racial antiquity, "ancestors" and common descent. Special importance had been assigned to different branches of modern science where the idea of inherent difference found legitimacy, and "race" was perceived primarily as a scientific concept.² Inasmuch as national ideologies played a crucial role in the public political domain, the intersection between "race," "ancestors," ethnogenesis, science and politics was quite obvious.

The meaning of the term "race" has changed over time. Most of the authors trace the origin of the modern, biological concept of "race" to around the middle of the 18th century. At that time it superseded the previous common definition of "race" as "lineage" meant to distinguish primarily the noble status. "Blood" lost its genealogical/class connotation, gaining a biological grounding, and national categories received racial overtones. By and large, the 19th-century use of the term "race" was quite loose. It generally referred to a

1 Barkan (1992), p. 17.

2 Fenton (1998), p. 36.

group believed to be united by common descent, something that today would be called “ethnicity” rather than “race.” Common descent was thus one element emphasized by “race” theoreticians, but it combined in varying ways and proportions with an acknowledgment of other factors such as geography, climate and institutions.³ Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 20th century, the scientific usage of “race” continued to be multiple and at times self-contradictory. The term was used to refer to any geographical, religious, class-based or color-based grouping and most frequently to linguistic and ethnic divisions.⁴

Nowadays, it is largely acknowledged that “race” has no ontological status, that it is a social and ideological construct. Racial categories cannot be explained through a scientific system of classification based on biological methods.⁵ Thus, the decline of “race” as an analytical category resulted from the inability of racial typology to define any consistent demarcations, as well as from the fact that the dispute over the relative impact of heredity versus environment could not be resolved.⁶ As a definition, for the purposes of my study, I subscribe to Brubaker’s thesis that one should not treat “races” as things that really exist in the world but more as perspectives *on* the world.⁷ One should think of “race” in terms of a practical category, ideology, narrative, cognitive schema and a way of seeing, thinking, talking, and framing claims. It could be also a tendency to naturalize and essentialize, to emphasize “the tie of blood.” More specifically, drawing upon theoretical and historical racial studies, I would define “race” as a notion, or a perspective, of innate biological or genetic differences. “Race” presupposes the belief that people are members of a biological group with all that this implies. Sometimes racial thought could emphasize visible physical characteristics of human variation, the differences in outward appearance. They included such characteristics as face, shape of the head and the skull, complexion, skin color, lips, nose, hair texture, etc. In some cases all those features were linked to the human character—and the capacities of human beings were seen as “racially” inherited. In fact, the innate qualities and defects were described as genetically transmitted through “blood” and “genes.” Therefore, we can speak about racial thought whenever

3 Brubaker (1992), p. 211.

4 For examples of such uses, see the contributions to this volume by B. Bilmez, A. Puto, D. Lilova, B. Aleksov, A. Vezenkov, T. Marinov and B. Trencsényi.

5 MacMaster (2001), p. 1.

6 Barkan (1992), pp. 3–4.

7 Brubaker (2004), pp. 78–79, 81.

we find visions that people were different because they represented constant types; when we come across the belief in hierarchy and inheritance; whenever hierarchy and inheritance are used for a causal explanation of social and cultural issues. Due to the variety of possible implications this sometimes gave crucial importance to the theme of common descent and the “ancestors” of the nation in national ideologies.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the instrumentalizations of the concept of “race” in the public sphere, as well as in supposedly scientific discourse in the *fin-de-siècle* Bulgarian case—that is, in the years roughly from the 1880s until the Balkan wars of 1912–1913. By exploring the interaction and dissemination of various European ideas within the Bulgarian context, I will try to reveal the meaning of the term “race” and its intersections with other similar terms; to trace how Bulgarian authors imagined the nation’s “ancestors”; what meaning they conferred on “Bulgarian blood”; how contemporaries perceived and interpreted certain historical figures or groups of the population; how, through this concept, the Bulgarian intellectual and political elite tried to cope with racial hierarchies; and with the idea of “white” supremacy. I would like also to investigate how the race discourse manifested itself in various texts across political and ideological boundaries as well as different theoretical and philosophical perspectives on “race.”

I have chosen the term “*fin-de-siècle*” because it provides a commonly accepted description of the European context at that time, conjuring up certain accepted aspects of the period that were important to the Bulgarian case. At that time Europe was marked by an anti-liberal shift in politics, cultural pessimism, growing militarism and the emergence of a new nationalism and imperialism. The scientific racial discourse achieved increasing power and legitimacy and nationalism became more focused on “race.” Social Darwinism was omnipresent throughout European higher culture. Contemporaries used terms like “race” and “nation” interchangeably. The nation was viewed as a distinct biological group carrying essential characteristics in the germplasm or “blood.” “Race” as a term and evolutionary and medical language influenced by Darwin entered intensively into the historiographic discourse. Even the notions of social groups, castes and classes were influenced by racial language and the conflict of “races” within nations became part of public discourse.

During the second half of the 19th century in Europe the transformation of “race” as a central concept in the social sciences encouraged and strengthened the thought of how the “nation” was perceived. Especially after the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), explanations of history, culture and politics in racial terms became popular following the established visions of “ancestors,” the

Aryan myth, the racial hierarchy between Europeans and non-Europeans as well as the hierarchies within the "white race." Darwinian evolutionism, supplemented later by genetics, provided racialism with what looked like a powerful set of "scientific" reasons for stressing the importance of "racial purity." It induced the practice of using "race" and "nation" as virtual synonyms insofar as "nation" was seen as the above-mentioned distinct biological group.⁸

In what follows, priority will be given to that part of the European racial heritage which was concerned with proving essential differences within the European family itself.⁹ As Bell has emphasized, the intellectual framework of these narrower racial differences was largely the same as the one of global racial classification, only that here "science" developed in the service not of slavery and imperialism, but of nationalism.¹⁰ Thus the catalogue of "national characters" emerged under the classification of "races," and Europeans were classified on a hierarchical scale from the dark-skinned and passionate Southerners to the fair-skinned and rational Northerners. The Northern and Western Europeans ("Nordics") were thereby thought of as inherently more intelligent than the "Alpines" and "Mediterraneans" from Eastern and Southern Europe.

"RACE" IN BULGARIA

Although according to law, the theoretical concept of "subject" or "citizen" was intended to be inclusive, largely under German intellectual influence, Bulgarian nationalism had also been swept along by the Romantic passion for the folkloric rediscovery of the "people." It emphasized mostly linguistic and cultural differences and saw the "nation" as having existed since time immemorial. As in other parts of Europe, nationalism appealed to "language," "blood" and common descent. National myths and historiographies continued to eagerly seek "ancestors" as a part of nationalist concerns with cultural authenticity.

However, since the populations of the territorial nation-states were almost invariably too heterogeneous, the common ancestry of the "people" was always to some extent fictive. No nation possesses an ethnic base naturally or biologically. As Hobsbawm has emphasized, the demographic history of

8 Hobsbawm (1992), pp. 108–109; MacMaster, p. 56.

9 Hannaford (1996), pp. 235–276.

10 Bell (2002), p. 60.

Europe had been such that the origin of ethnic groups was extremely multifarious.¹¹ Christie stresses that for nationalist propagandists, scientific racial investigations were never satisfactory because the historical processes of migration and intermarriage meant that it was impossible to define clearly innate racial differences, except in categories that were as broad as “Mongolians” or “Indo-Europeans.”¹² As far as the Bulgarian case was concerned, the mixture of pre-Roman Thracians, Romans, Greeks, Slavs, Old Bulgars (proto-Bulgarians), Vlachs, Pechenegs, Cumans, Tartars, Armenians, Ottoman Turks, Roma, Jews, Arnauts, etc., made the character of the “Bulgarian race” debatable. Situated in the European context, the Bulgarian discourse about “race,” and “descent” was largely appropriation, accommodation and assimilation of the racialist discourse and established racial hierarchy of the West. The Bulgarian elite was forced to invent and elaborate a myth of common ancestry and make this pedigree putative for the sense of ethnic identification.¹³ The ideas of “the people” originating in the French Enlightenment, French Jacobinism, and Mazzini’s nationalism combined with universalism and humanitarianism, Anglo-Saxon liberalism and civic humanism were circulating among this elite. However, the Romantic ideas of the *Volk*, the *Blutsge-meinschaft*, the *Volksseele* and the *Volksgeist* had their own place as well. In that context, “the people” became an important dimension in the political transformations of *fin-de-siècle* Bulgaria.

It should be noted that the main authorities that were important for the development of 19th-century racial thought were not translated into Bulgarian. However, one did not need to have read them in order to be influenced by their discourse. The entire public atmosphere—through different translations in the Bulgarian press—was impregnated with the then current racial discourse coming from the Western European and Russian press. It deserves mentioning that none of the major authors of the extreme racial thought: Arthur de Gobineau; Francis Galton; August Weismann; Vacher de Lapouge; Otto Ammon; Ludwig Gumplowicz; or Houston S. Chamberlain were translated into Bulgarian, although it was clear that their basic ideas were familiar among the intellectual elite. During the first years after the establishment of the modern Bulgarian state (1879)—as in the previous decades—the usage of the term “*race*” was rare. Bulgarian authors spoke about “*narod*” [folk, people] and/or “*narodnost*” [nationality], with the

11 Hobsbawm (1992), p. 63.

12 Christie (1998), p. 37.

13 Smith (1991), p. 22.

meaning of “nation” [*natziya*]. In fact, the term “Bulgarian people” was interchangeable with “Bulgarian nation.” In the Romanticist discourse this “people” was associated with “national physiognomy and self-consciousness.”¹⁴ The term “*narodnost*” was semantically equivalent with “nation” [*natziya*]. Thus in 1888, Renan’s celebrated lecture at the Sorbonne *Qu’est ce qui un nation?* (1882), was published in a Bulgarian journal with the title *Shto e narodnost?*¹⁵ Those cases when the Bulgarians used the term “nation” were very rare, and when they did, it usually designated some foreign people. When describing the Bulgarian nation, Bulgarian commentators usually preferred the term “nationality” [*natzionalnost*]. Bulgarian notions about the “folk” were largely formed under the German Romantic influence as can be discerned in the rhetoric about the Bulgarian uniqueness focusing on “our national physiognomy and our popular language,” on “our own face.”¹⁶ Therefore, like “every other people” the Bulgarians were considered to be a “people” with “its own history, its own past, its own rights and customs, its own literature.”¹⁷ Special importance was ascribed to “our language.”¹⁸ “Race” as a term began to be used relatively late, and for a very long time it sounded awkward within the Bulgarian context. There were instances when the whole of humankind was represented as a “race.” In many other cases “race” stood for a common descent based on a language family, as in the “Slavic race” or “German race.” In those and in other cases, explicitly or implicitly, the races in Europe were considered to be the German, the Latin and the Slavic. It was very similar to the way in which the term “tribe” was often used as the “Slavic tribe” or the “Western German and Roman tribes.” However, in other cases the different nations were designated as “tribes” (“Slavic tribes,” “English tribe,” “Great Russian tribe,” and “Bulgarian tribe”). There were yet other examples when “tribe” was implicitly considered as having a lower status than “nation.” Perhaps that was why sometimes the word “tribe” was left to designate a supposedly “non-civilized” community (“Asiatic tribe”). “Race,” as a factor, was distinguished and counterposed to “history,” “geographic” and “cultural”

14 Even sometimes, disclosing the ideological character of Romanticism, some Bulgarian authors explicitly mentioned that the “national physiognomy and self-consciousness” should be created through state action, *Svoboda* [Liberty], VII, (15.05.1893), no. 1100, 1.

15 Dimitriev (Balabanov) (1888), pp. 682–725.

16 *Nezavisimost* [Independence], (8.03. 1886), no. 2, 1.

17 *Nezavisima Bălgaria* [Independent Bulgaria], (25. 10. 1886), no. 16, 2.

18 *Svoboda* [Liberty], (10. 12. 1886), no. 12, 1; *Svoboda* [Liberty], III, (11. 01.1889), no. 234, 1; *Svoboda* [Liberty], III, (22. 07. 1889), no. 286, 2.

conditions.¹⁹ In other instances the term was dissociated from “common blood” and made to indicate temper and culture formed by history.²⁰ Sometimes the “Bulgarian people” was defined in racial and organicist terms as “anyone in whose veins the pure Bulgarian blood is flowing.”²¹ But in many other occasions the Bulgarians were represented as related to the other Slavic peoples with “the same blood.”

During the whole period the usage of the term “race” was rather ambiguous, fluid and multiple. It could vary from designating members of a linguistic family to a biologically differentiated people sharing common “pure Bulgarian blood.” More often than not the Bulgarian authors would rather use some other word than “race” in order to express the sense of community. The very concept of “race” was not essential to any of these designations or explanations. The word had little analytical value and it was not used to designate especially external physiological differences. Instead, the Bulgarian nation was described with terms like “*народ*” and “*народност*,” frequently used interchangeably.

THE “BLOOD IN OUR VEINS” OR “OUR ANCESTORS”

In the 19th century, many authors saw history as biography of “races,” which retained permanent essences. For the organically thinking nationalists, the Romantic quest for “our true ancestors” was essential for the cause of the nation. That is why several myths of ethnic descent appeared combining historical fact and legendary elaboration. The Romantic idea of the transmission of “blood” and kinship gave racialist thinking and the notion of “racial peculiarities” intellectual respectability²² with “ancestry” turning out to be one of the most important centers of gravity for the concept of “race.”

At that period the English were quite exceptional in boasting of their mongrel origins, referring to Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, Normans, Scots, Irish etc.²³ However, even in England, it was the theory of the “Norman

19 Dragomanov (1894), p. 74 sqq.

20 Kisimov (1886), p. 25.

21 *Nezavisimost* [Independence], I., (3. 05. 1886), No. 15, 2.

22 See Bernal (1991), p. 224; Lewis, Wigen (1997), pp. 76–82; Mosse, (1996), p. 39; Smith, (1998), p. 2.

23 Hobsbawm (1992), p. 108; Barkan (1992), p. 23.

Yoke” or usurpation that was put forward and counterposed to “ancient Saxon liberties” in the 17th century.²⁴ Although, according to A. Smith, the conflict over the “Norman yoke” was more ideological than genealogical²⁵—it opened space for later reconstructions of the English past. These reconstructions referred to a Germanic origin and forefathers representing the Germans, Scandinavians, Frisians, and Angles as the “ancestors” of the “races” qualified to reign.²⁶ It was considered that the English, better than any other Germanic people, represented the traditional “genius” of their “ancestors.”²⁷ English historians, drawing on the work of their German counterparts, were proud of their “pure Teutonic blood,” “our Gothic or Teutonic ancestors” and the transmission of Saxon “genius.” They considered the “English race” as “superior to others.”²⁸

French revolutionaries turned to the “Franks” and “Gauls” for a natural justification for change of governance. They harked back to “Gallic ancestors” and represented Frankish aristocracy as foreign usurpers.²⁹ Moreover, at the end of the 19th century, the fashion for Gaulish studies interpreted classical civilization as superior and representing the Roman invasion of Gaul as an action that brought Gaul into a civilized world.³⁰ A parallel argument emerged in Italy with Etruscomania as well.³¹ Moreover, Swedish intellectuals began to look for “ancestors” in the family of Germanic nations. They considered the people of Gotland to have been “Goths,” or members of an Ancient Low-Germanic tribe.³² In medieval Spain, the nobility tried to identify with “Goths” [*Godos*], overestimating Germanic “blood” at the expense of conquered Iberians.³³ However, by the end of the 19th century, when the concepts “Indo-European,” “Aryan” and “Celt” were frequently conflated and confused, science argued that the Celtiberian “nation” was the first manifestation of Spanish nationality.³⁴ Even in order to be as Aryan as possible, the Celtic element

24 Hill (1958), p. 50; Wallerstein (2003), pp. 670–671; Dixon (1976), pp. 25–26.

25 Hutchinson, (2000), p. 1400.

26 Hannaford (1996), pp. 246–248.

27 MacDougall (1982), p. 2.

28 *Ibid.*, I, pp. 91–97.

29 Brubaker (1992), p. 101; Smith (1998), p. 175; Hutchinson (2000), pp. 1410–1411; Bell (2001), AHR, pp. 1233–1234.

30 Fleury-Ilett (1996), p. 200.

31 Wallerstein (2003), pp. 670–671.

32 Kemiläinen (1998), pp. 90, 101.

33 See Castro (1954), pp. 69–88; Maravall (1954), pp. 320, 354.

34 Costa (1879).

was more highly valued than the Iberian.³⁵ In Russia, Pan-Slavism fought for the eventual unification of the “entire Slavic race.” While in Hungary, intellectuals cherished the idea of the “Turanic race”;³⁶ in Romania, where the Slavs and other “migratory” peoples were being marginalized, they advocated two-fold Daco-Roman purity.³⁷ In the 19th century, Finns were still proud of a supposed Turanian origin.³⁸ In the beginning of the 20th century Kazan Tartars identified their roots with the Golden Horde.³⁹

The logic of Bulgarian imagination about “our ancestors” can not be explained without reference to the contributions of history, philology, anthropology and other disciplines on this topic in Europe. Since the end of the 18th century, theories that the “Bulgars” of Asparuh (who settled the Balkan Peninsula in the seventh century) were “Tartars” or “Turks,” and contemporary Bulgarians were “Slavinized Tartars” were popular in the West. However, the idea of the Slavic descent of the Bulgarians dominated overwhelmingly during the 1830–70s and notions about the “Tartar,” “Hun,” “Turkic,” “Finn” or “Hungarian” origin of the “Old Bulgars” were either rejected or neglected. It was exactly the Slavic identity that gave the Bulgarians a chance for a symbolic escape from the Ottoman Empire and better self-positioning according to the established racial hierarchy, the “Aryan myth” and different visions that circulated about the family of Indo-European people and languages. Moreover, within this European interpretative framework, the Tartars and Turanian languages were represented as inferior to the Aryans. Therefore, the wide reception of the idea of Slavic descent can be interpreted as the accommodation and appropriation of the racist discourse and established hierarchy in Western Europe, which still put the Slavs among the Indo-Europeans. Moreover, the question of whether language relationship corresponded to a biological one was hardly discussed at that time. It was believed that all peoples belonging to the same linguistic family had the same ancestors.⁴⁰ Besides, the idea of Slavic descent was a solution that the Bulgarian elite took in the frameworks of 19th-century international policy and the development of the Eastern Question.

35 Zapatero (1996), pp. 181, 185, 189.

36 Turda (2004), esp. pp. 102–103.

37 Boia (1997), pp. 14–15.

38 Kemiläinen (1998), p. 117.

39 Shnirelman (1996), p. 22.

40 Kemiläinen (1998), pp. 40, 66, 83, 209.

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 and the establishment of the modern Bulgarian State (1879) further strengthened in the Bulgarian public sphere the already axiomatic idea of the Slavic pedigree of the Bulgarians, as well as the self-perception of the elite that the Bulgarian nation was part of the “Slavic tribe.” Relations with Russia and the other Slavs were depicted as “blood ties” and “tribal ties.” The Bulgarians were represented as “pure Slavic,” “pure European” and “Indo-European type” but “Asparuch’s group of glorious Chuds, Finns or Tartars” was neglected.⁴¹ Although the word “race” was not used, the very vocabulary of the “Indo-European type” as a permanent one and of the “purity of blood” clearly shows the borrowings from the established racial thought in Europe at the time.

Ironically, at the beginning of the 1880s the theory of “the Turkic” origin of the Old Bulgars was even strengthened internationally among the academic community. Moreover, many representatives of the Bulgarian political class began to share this theory in their private discourse, or as the last and convincing word of science. However, as Petko R. Slaveikov admitted in a private conversation with the Czech historian Konstantin Jireček, the Bulgarian politicians were alerted of its public recognition for “political reasons.”⁴² During the Stambolov government of 1887–94, when diplomatic relations between Sofia and Saint Petersburg were broken for a period of nearly 10 years, many nationalists continued to insist that the Bulgarians were “pure Slavs.”⁴³ This firm identification with the Slavic pedigree and avoidance of the “Tartars” or “Ugro-Finns” was a way to emphasize that the Bulgarians were Slavs and (Indo-) Europeans.

Nevertheless, during that same period of the Stambolov government, different interpretations appeared of the Bulgarian “blood” and of the qualities and temper that this “blood” had determined. Although still isolated and lacking in elaboration and coherence, these interpretations marked a crucial rupture with the prevailing paradigm of the “pure Bulgarian blood” as a “Slavic one.” As it has already been mentioned, the Bulgarian intelligentsia was aware of the achievements in the prestigious international academic studies on the descendancy of Old Bulgars or “proto-Bulgarians.” Even on the pages of literary journals the reader could learn about the “strong Turko-Finn tribe,” which populated the Balkan Peninsula during the seventh century and

41 *Napred* [Forward], (10.08.1889), No. 10., 4–5.

42 *Jireček* (1995), p. 259.

43 *Svoboda* [Liberty] (17.03.1890), No. 348, 2.

gave its name to the state.⁴⁴ Moreover, in that period of conflict with Russia, obviously some Bulgarian public figures tried to find an escape from the idea of Slavicism. In this regard they evoked the origin of Asparuh's Bulgars and underlined it with its different versions—Tartar, Finn, or Turkic. This was sometimes made in a typical racial language that spoke of Bulgarian "talent," "innate instinct," and "gift" as qualities inherited from "our ancestors" identified with Asparuh's Bulgars. In this context it was confessed that "there is some Tartar blood in our veins" and this "blood" determined the military qualities of the Bulgarians in comparison with the Serbs.⁴⁵ On another occasion it was the Bulgarian Prime Minister Stambolov who, echoing a widespread racial view about the "Slavs," described Bulgarians' qualities such as "a certain talent, innate instinct to govern and organize" as intrinsic and inherited from "our ancestors," referring again to Asparuh's Bulgars. To these virtues Stambolov juxtaposed arbitrarily the failed "Poland, populated by pure Slavs."⁴⁶

These versions were evoked at a time when the racial language became more visible in the Bulgarian public sphere. Characteristically sometimes the "temper" and "qualities" of a "people" were represented not as products of history, culture or social conditions but as determined by "descent" from a certain "race." It was combined with accidental attempts to propagate negative racial visions of the Slavs as "feeble and of weak temper" at the expense of some more positive characteristics of the "German race."⁴⁷ Moreover, the Western racial prejudice was adapted according to which the lesser breeds in the East were inherently incapable of state building, and hence fit only to be ruled by the others.⁴⁸ The availability of "certain Tartar blood," next to the Slavic one, was represented as a guarantee for the higher military qualities of 19th-century Bulgarians in comparison with those of such pure Slavs as the Serbs.⁴⁹

At the same time, these examples also indicate how the vision of a racial mixture was already seen as something superior and not leading to the nation's "degeneration." In fact, the elements inherited from the Old Bulgars were seen as putting late 19th-century Bulgarians higher than the "Pure Slavs"

44 *Kritika* [Critic], 1891., VII-VIII., 277.

45 *Svoboda* [Liberty], IV, (20.12.1889), No. 326.

46 *Stenografski dnevnik*..., (1893), pp. 56–58.

47 *Svoboda*, [Liberty], (26.03.1893), No. 1063., 1.

48 See for example Wolff (1994), pp. 300, 312; Malia (1999), p. 133.

49 See note 28.

such as the Poles and the Serbs. The plural pedigree gave to some Bulgarian politicians and opinion makers an opportunity to represent a richer transmission of certain spiritual values within the lines of descent. However, it is known that myths of origin furnish the criteria for judging what is inauthentic or impure. There was even something more at stake here. These versions contained a latent future clash of interpretations of authenticity, possible reformulations of what was intrinsic to the Bulgarians and what was foreign and extraneous. It could also generate different projects of "rebirth" in order to achieve self-purification in a direction opposite to the one previously endorsed. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned lack of a coherent non-Slavic or anti-Slavic discourse shows the limits of this "race mapping."

It is noteworthy that in history textbooks, the shift to a more racist language did not take place. The term "race" was not used at all. The interpretation of the "ancestors" also followed the version that had been established since the late 1860s. The problem of the pedigree of the Old Bulgars was not emphasized either. "Finnic Bulgarians" were seen as easily melted into the Slavs, and the "Bulgarian people" were said to come from a "pure Slavic tribe."⁵⁰ It is evident that there were no above-directed efforts to make changes in those interpretations. However, at the end of the 19th century one can come across some slight nuances that were not dependent upon the political context. The possible explanation could be the above-mentioned renewed importance of the "Aryan myth" abroad, positing racialism underwritten by an increasingly reputable science.⁵¹ In the second half of the 1890s, we can see for the first time in some textbooks explicit descriptions of the "Slavs" as "Aryans." In one, the Slavs were depicted as the "last Aryans who came from Asia to Europe,"⁵² in another, a child could read: "The Slavs migrated from Asia to Europe. They left their Aryan fatherland after the Germans."⁵³ These sentences were missing from the previous textbook editions. In this regard, they are, at least partially, more revealing about what was at stake with the

50 See for example Bobchev (1882); (1883); (1896). In Dr. Manchov's textbook Old Bulgars were "one Scythian group of Bulgarians." Manchov, (1881), 5th edition, pp. 9-10. In Ganchev they were "not from Slavic origin, but Fin." Ganchev (1888), p. 5; (1892), p. 6. In 1899 they were from "Ural-Fin origin, spoke Finnish language, mixed with Turkish words." Ganchev (1899), p. 8.

51 Barkan (1992), p. 19.

52 Dermanchev (1896), p. 114.

53 Bobchev (1899), p. 9.

insistence on “Slavic ancestors” that had continued for decades. This insistence gave the Bulgarian elite a chance for self-positioning among the “Aryans.”

There was yet another facet of this search for a symbolic link between the contemporary Bulgarians and their “ancestors.” At times of political crises and campaigns for mass mobilization, political writers invoked the names of Bulgarian medieval monarchs and their aristocratic “blood” representing them as “true ancestors” of males who were commoners. This demonstrates again how ancestry was socially constructed and culturally elaborated, how writers chose to venerate some remote ancestors and to discard others. In that way, they tried to provoke a sense of honor, virility and “knight hood” in their contemporaries. Since the beginning of the Ottoman *Tanzimat*, Bulgarian history textbooks had tried to create a cult of the “military spirit of the forbears” emphasizing the great moments and events of the medieval history of the First and Second Bulgarian kingdoms and the figures of their rulers.⁵⁴ There was also a political tradition already established by the national revolutionary movement against Ottoman rule during the 1860s and 1870s that referred to the “pure Bulgarian blood” of the medieval kings. During the political crises of 1886–87 the political associations called “Bulgaria for itself” released many proclamations and revived this discourse. The proclamations tried to summon the patriots ready to defend their country (this time against the menace of Russian interference) as “descendants” of the “glorious Bulgarian kings” Krum, Boris, Simeon, Samuil, Asen, Kaloyan.⁵⁵ These political documents extended a symbolically privileged descent and a noble lineage to the whole Bulgarian people. The “blood” of the ordinary Bulgarians was depicted as aristocratic and directly coming from the “veins” of the medieval monarchical figures qualified to reign but never to submit to anyone else. These monarchs and their victories were invoked to embody the real “essence” of the “people,” symbolically all Bulgarians were raised to men of noble blood. This was to vindicate the uprising against Ottoman rule in the first case and the fight for “independence” from Russian tutelage in the second. Typically it was the quality of “honor,” traditionally considered to be imminent for the aristocratic “lineage,” which was transmitted through the “blood” and formed a very important part of this discourse. The irony here was that the great majority of

54 Lilova (2004), pp. 199, 256.

55 For more see Detchev (1997), pp. 326–337.

Bulgarian peasants had neither heard the names of their medieval rulers, nor did they know that such had once existed.⁵⁶

The above-mentioned instances demonstrate that although the word “race” was not very often in the Bulgarian public sphere or in scientific or academic language, the notion that the “people” had some essential permanent qualities and virtues that were transmitted through “blood” was very salient. Nevertheless, very often the belief was employed metaphorically. Moreover, skin color, hair form, eye form, and other facial features were not discussed in public discourse. Physical differences that were typical for the racial thought had not turned into important social or national markers. However, as far as the periodical, literary and political press was full of reviews and translations from the major international newspapers and journals, the category of “race” was represented on their pages. The literate Bulgarians must have been informed that in Europe, “race” was already equal to “nation” [*народ*] in many cases when the press referred to “French race,” “German race,” “English race,” etc. There was a process of a relative racialization of the notion of the “people.”

ACADEMY, SCIENCE, “RACE” AND “DESCENT”

History as an academic discipline was not very much influenced by the idea of “race.” The word was usually translated as “*племе*” [tribe] in the broadest sense of the term. However, in 1888 the French-educated, famous Bulgarian lawyer, journalist, politician and later university professor, Balabanov (translating Renan), instead of “tribe,” used “*paca*” [race], describing it as a “foreign” word. “Race” was used to describe ethnic or linguistic differences between groups and it was among other factors forging the nation such as “language,” “geography,” “religion,” etc. In that way, Balabanov tried to distinguish “race” from the French word *tribu* that he translated as “*племе*.” Otherwise, in the text “tribes” and “tribal” could be substituted in the translation by “races” and “racial” in the sense of ethnic or linguistic division be-

56 Moreover, how “pure” “Bulgarian” and “Slavic” was this “blood”? It is very well-known that the proto-Bulgarian Dulo dynasty had had a monarchical lineage that had come from the designation “Bulgarian” not as an ethnonym but as politonym. Although identifying themselves with the Bulgarian political and monarchical tradition, the ethnic descent of King Samuel and his brothers is contestable and perhaps Armenian. The same political identification was also valid for the three dynasties of the Second Bulgarian kingdom—the Asen, Terter and Shishman. However, it seems that ethnically they were predominantly of Cuman descent.

tween different communities in the Balkans, medieval France, or Switzerland.⁵⁷ Balabanov felt a need to clarify for his readers:

[...] the question here is not at all about the primary and widely known division of the humanity in 4–5 main tribes or races, different between them in color of the body, yet different in their intellectual qualities, in their capabilities or inabilities for state organization, in their historic development or centuries-old stagnation.

He added that it was talking about the “so called white race of the Caucasian or Iranian peoples,” about “the peoples from this **white** [author’s bold] race...”⁵⁸ Moreover, some traces of racial thinking widespread in Europe at that time entered the pages of the Bulgarian *Periodical journal of the Bulgarian literary society*. Balabanov admitted that the question of races as a whole, which had been left or forgotten or underevaluated before, for some time had acquired great scientific importance, it was often raised and it was treated in various ways.

According to Balabanov, the peoples from “the white race” were “more lofty and elevated than all other races, Ethiopian, Yellow, etc.” and they were called “with justice” “the peoples of history.” However, it was exactly the publication by Renan that subverted the concept of “race.” Balabanov himself definitely opposed the racial theory as well. More precisely, he was against the hierarchies within the “white” or “Indo-German race” according to “intellectual development” and “state life.” According to Balabanov, some authors had already made exaggerated statements, and he quoted Bluntchli who stood for the “unity of the human kin” and “common human nature even in the lowest tribes.”⁵⁹ Moreover, in order to attack the view that the Slavs were racially inferior to the peoples from “Aryan” or “Semitic tribes,” he quoted Danilevski’s idea that the future belonged to the “Slavic tribe.”⁶⁰ This stance against racial explanation was not isolated, other university professors were at odds with it as well. The Ukrainian historian Dragomanov, who taught at the University of Sofia, announced that the differences between the Slavic institutions, on the one hand, and the Roman and the German ones on the other,

57 Dimitriev (Balabanov) (1888), pp. 690, 698, 700.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 705.

59 For similar insights that had circulated in the previous decades, see D. Lilova’s contribution to this volume.

60 Dimitriev (Balabanov) (1888), p. 707.

resulted from “geographical” and “cultural” conditions, not from racial factors. From this point of view, he emphasized the differences in the political institutions among the Slavs themselves.⁶¹

This said, there was a Romantic notion of the “history of fatherland” that strongly prevailed among the professionally trained historians and specialists in the humanities. Historiography was irrevocably bound up with the ideas of nation and the nation state. In 1901, the Bulgarian Historical Association was established to study above all the “history of the fatherland.” The Association admired what was seen in science as a 19th-century critic of the “rational method” of the Enlightenment. According to the Association’s philosophy:

the life of the peoples is an organic development, that is determined by multiple, various factors, which do not always obey to human will and they have their own natural development.⁶²

Thus, history was called to demonstrate that the unified and homogeneous community remained the same despite the processes of historical change over centuries. Even Balabanov, despite Renan’s idea that nations were “something fairly new in history,” regarded them as something eternal in the Balkans. He wrote how the “different peoples fell silent” during the “4–5 ages under Turkish domination” keeping their “tribal affiliations” which began to “awake” during the 19th century.⁶³ Perhaps the author found it impossible to ignore completely the reality in which the Bulgarian nation still had to be forged. That is why he said that:

there is much more to be desired, much to be expected, much to be done and much to be added.⁶⁴

Some professional historians like Zlatarski, particularly at the beginning of his career, were not able to avoid contemporary Romantic terminology. Having in mind medieval phenomena, he spoke in one of his lectures about the “raising of national spirit” and “the establishment of the popular ideal.” He represented the “nation” that developed “its own national principles” at the medieval age. At the end of the lecture, Zlatarski even began to mention the

61 Dragomanov, (1894), p. 74.

62 Belezghi (1905), pp. 4, 6.

63 Dimitriev (1888), pp. 687, 692.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 722.

future fulfillment of the “common popular ideal,” which the Bulgarian people should aim for in order to fulfil:

with success the task destined from the beginning in the history of the whole Slavdom.⁶⁵

From the point of view of “race” these notions were controversial, and in certain contexts they could have different additional developments. In Zlatarski’s vision one could see the language of Romantic nationalism and its insight of an “organic nation” as well as a possible opportunity for this interpretation of the “nation” to turn into a definition of the nation itself in more racialized terms. The organicism somehow presupposed genetically transmitted differences and inheritance. In this regard, there were strong racial elements hidden in Romanticism. Moreover, the historiographic notions about a “community of blood” and “national spirit” situated this presumably scientific disciplinary language very close to the “pure” national ideology that was dominating in political journalism. According to German Romanticist canon and its Russian Slavophile version, as far as the “spirit of the nation,” and therefore its language, reflected the body, nationality was based on “blood” that was supposed to be “pure.” It explains why even the Bulgarian academic history canon for a very long time supported Marin Drinov’s narrative from the late 1860s, emphasizing the Slavs and neglecting the Bulgars in the story about Bulgarian ethnogenesis. This canon illustrates how interconnected were “language” and “blood” and why when referring to Asparuh’s Bulgars it should be emphasized that the Bulgarian people are “not their descendent and there is nothing in common with them” counterposing Old Bulgars to “our ancestors the Slavs.”⁶⁶ However, there was still a difference between this self-assertive national vision of the past and a biological theory of “race.” It could emphasize the priority of some internal essence, although even transmitted through “blood,” over external physiological differences. Moreover, it was evident that still the word “race” had not acquired its honorable place in scientific vocabulary. Nevertheless, Balabanov interpreted Renan’s “spiritual principle” or “soul,” in a more Romantic fashion representing “spirit” and “soul” as penetrating into the “organism” of the “Bulgarian people” and creat-

65 Zlatarski (1896), p. 30.

66 Quoted from Shishmanov (1900), pp. 565–566.

ing the Bulgarian “habitus” [*bit*].⁶⁷ He even wrote that according to Renan, “history renders the grandchildren equal with the ancestors.”⁶⁸

Therefore, Balabanov was able to realize and use the hidden potential in Renan’s text for a more Romantic and less civic or political interpretation. In 1896, Zlatarski asserted that the “history of fatherland” began with “the emergence of the Bulgarian kingdom” in the late seventh century. The rulers in the First Bulgarian kingdom united “the kins of the same Slavic tribe” and later “the parts of the same nationality [*narodnost*]—Bulgarian.”⁶⁹

What did Bulgarian academia say about the “ancestors”? Definitely, it spoke about “the disappearance of the Thracians without any trace.”⁷⁰ The young Zlatarski also ignored any role of the Old Bulgars in the establishment of what he called “Bulgarian nation” [*bălgarska narodnost*]. According to him, during the Great Migration of the peoples, “this country” was “devastated by a majority of barbarian peoples and tribes.” Nevertheless, he stressed, it received “its national physiognomy, which it keeps until present time.” The Balkan Peninsula was populated by “Slavic tribes, who gradually united themselves and founded an entity, one nation [*narodnost*]—Bulgarian.” Later he was much more revealing when writing about the “unification of the Slavic tribes in one Slavic nation [*narodnost*].”⁷¹ In this regard, Zlatarski strictly followed the interpretative canon and moral implications established in the late 1860s by Drinov.

At that time in Europe appeared the above-mentioned amalgam of biological theories of social change known since the 1890s as Social Darwinism. It possessed a potency to attract and incorporate both racial thinking and nationalism into a new matrix. Darwinism was applied to support theories of mental and physical degeneration through heredity and acquired traits. Several thinkers like Le Bon, Galton, Weismann, Lapouge and Gumpłowicz contributed for the elaboration of those ideas. The works of Otto Ammon and Woltmann had special importance. By the end of the 19th century, as a result of those developments, it was accepted that man could be recognized for what he/she was from the instant signs of his/her material appearance. The cephalic index was applied as an analytical tool and scholars began to make

67 Dimitriev (1888), pp. 721–725.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 720.

69 Zlatarski (1896), pp. 26–27.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

judgements about “race” through measuring the shape of the skull and using racial rhetoric.⁷²

New methods concerning a measuring of the thousands of army conscripts received positive responses among some circles of the Bulgarian scientific community. It was 1894 when some comments appeared on Otto Ammon’s measuring of thousands of military conscripts and pupils. It was believed that if even part of Ammon’s conclusions were right, it would mean that:

from the anthropological explorations and dry tables that are now a matter of interest only for the specialists, after some time it will be possible to be drawn not a few instructive conclusions.⁷³

It was a sign that in the near future the Bulgarian context would not be untouched by the respectability that racial theories achieved in anthropology at the late 19th century. As a result of the European trend within the Bulgarian intellectual field, one can regard the great number of publications that covered the fashionable and more prestigious topic of heredity as being used to explain a great variety of social phenomena.

However, the educated Bulgarian was also aware of the intellectual developments in biology and the achievements of other scholars like Haeckel, Huxley and Virchow. Therefore, he was informed of many warnings against current ideas about “race struggle” as a key to human development. He knew that there were no “pure” or “higher” and “lower races,” but only mixtures of morphological types and that differences between people were more cultural than physical. This educated Bulgarian knew about the existing hostility against some aristocratic and chauvinistic theories of an ancient “Aryan race.” Very soon Bulgarian academia and intelligentsia became very suspicious especially towards Lapouge and Ammon’s “laws,” their “ultra-Darwinistic spirit” and “suspicious precision.” Some intellectual circles were even against “this Darwinist sociology” that was regarded imprecisely as a “pointless repercussion of Nietzsche’s teaching.”⁷⁴ The Bulgarian educated public was aware of the difference between the Darwinist theories in sociology some 40 years ago with Haeckel and Lapouge and Ammon’s ideas about “race struggle.”⁷⁵

⁷² Hannaford (1996), pp. 328, 332.

⁷³ *Bălgarski pregled* [Bulgarian Review] (1894), II, p. 167.

⁷⁴ See for example Engelgard (1903), p. 43.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43–45.

Nevertheless, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, internationally the science of race, which traditionally had belonged to physical anthropology, reached its zenith in Europe.⁷⁶ That is why in Bulgaria it was impossible for some physicians not to take anthropometry so seriously. Following the practice of anthropological societies in Germany, they started to measure “the color of eyes, hair and skin” and to discuss the importance of these features for the “racial disposition” of the people. It was explicitly stated that the final goal of the project was to write “a monograph about the Bulgarian race.”⁷⁷ Notwithstanding, in those cases, not radical thinkers like Lapouge and Ammon, but the moderate Virchow was the main point of reference and authority for the Bulgarian specialists. Moreover, these studies subscribed to the opinion that the “peoples are only mixtures that express nowhere the real race.”⁷⁸ The methods of physical anthropology provoked a serious discussion among specialists and university professors joined the debate. Although some of them were definitely opposed,⁷⁹ it seems that others were ready to rely on these measurements.

This trend reached some figures working in other branches of science as well. It is true that when exploring the Old Bulgars, philologist Ivan Shishmanov was not very optimistic about the definition of the “Bulgarian type” with “anthropological data” and “craniologic measuring,” basically because there was not sufficient data.⁸⁰ However, in other cases he took these measurements more seriously, even those made by Bulgarian specialists “for good honor.” He was ready to excuse the “physical anthropology” for possible mistakes because it was a young discipline. What is more, Shishmanov was the one who prepared the plan for some anthropological research including “height, eye color, hair color, physiological features” as well as “heredity,” “acclimatization,” and “mixing.” He explicitly stated that “complex ethnogenetic questions” could not be resolved only with a grammar in hand. According to him, especially the linguist who often was compelled to build theories on “much more unhealthy material than the skulls,” should receive “cordially” the help that was given to him by anthropologists as well as the one given by historians, ethnographers, and archaeologists. Despite his caution to physical anthropology, Shishmanov referred to craniological data

76 Barkan (1992), pp. 4, 19–20.

77 Vatev, *Znachenieto* (1900), pp. 68–85.

78 *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 84–85. See also Vatev, *Oshte edin otgovor...* (1900), pp. 100–105.

79 Yurinich (1900), p. 117.

80 Shishmanov (1900), pp. 748, 751.

and measuring among which included the work of Broca, Virchow and John Beddoe.⁸¹

Shishmanov's study, marking the fundamental shift in treating the problem of Bulgarian ethnogenesis was written in the best traditions of 19th-century science. It was a demonstration of the serious professionalization that Bulgarian academia had passed from the late 1880s onwards. Not discussed in the history textbooks, the problem of the pedigree of the Old Bulgars had already been represented in academic writings and debated in the best traditions of European thought. Shishmanov stated that the problem about the "descent of proto-Bulgarians" was still not resolved. However, he announced many times in the text that in the previous decades the "science" had subscribed to the long debated hypothesis of "Turkic-Tartarian origin." The success of the hypothesis Shishmanov explained with the "development of linguistics." He also represented definitely the failure of the last representative of the Slavic hypothesis, D. Ilovaisky, since he had not been very well equipped and the "sober critic" of other scholars had broken his arguments. The readers could also see that according to craniologist Broca and his measuring of "pure Bulgarian skulls" which were "non-Slavic." Shishmanov added as information Virchow and Beddoe's achievements that rejected the Slavic descent of Bulgars too. Even according to the most detailed "craniological data," presented by Bogdanov, the population near Volga had already been "non-Slavic" whilst the "contemporary Bulgarian craniological type" was the one of the "very mixed population."⁸² Shishmanov also presented Bogdanov's final conclusion that "Old Bulgars had not been Slavs" but they had not been "Chuvash" either.⁸³ This argument clearly demonstrated a double shift in the Bulgarian academic field. It testified that the study on ethnogenesis became less Romantic and more professionalized, converted in a *wissenschaftlich* exercise. The vision about the historical ethnic mixture among contemporary Bulgarians was conspicuous.

To a certain extent, this trend of professionalization is confirmed by Vasil Zlatarski's lecture course on medieval Bulgarian history for the academic year 1901/02. He supported "the most widespread and commonly accepted by the famous and authoritative scholars view" about the ethnic origin [*народността*] of Asparuh's Bulgars. They were "neither from Slavic, or at all of

81 *Ibid.*, pp. 748–749.

82 *Ibid.*, pp. 748–750.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 751.

Aryan origin.”⁸⁴ According to Zlatarski: “Bulgarians were neither a Finn, or Slavic tribe, but they always were a people close to the Huns.” He announced that almost all new historians consider the Huns as part of the “family of the Turkic peoples.” However, subscribing to the “Turkic-Tartarian” theory, Zlatarski emphasized that he was against “Tunman-Engel’s theory” that “contemporary Bulgarians are rather Tartars or Turks than Slavs.” He referred to Drinov’s thesis that the “ancestors of the contemporary Bulgarians we should not consider part of the group of Asparuh but as Slavs.” Nevertheless, he defined Drinov’s interpretation as too an extreme one. Zlatarski was against the insight that Asparuh’s Bulgars disappeared in a way that “no one drop of blood from this people could enter in the veins of surrounding Slavic tribes.” According to him, the “disappearance of the Bulgarian element” did not happen so fast and it did not finish around the middle of the ninth century. Moreover, he emphasized that it survived especially in the northeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula where even later “other Asiatic peoples such as Cumans and Tartars” were to settle.⁸⁵

However, this professionalization of Bulgarian science was not a linear process and it had its discontinuities. Stefan S. Bobchev, for example, was a university professor and a specialist on the history of Bulgarian law. In 1909, celebrating the release of Drinov’s historical works, Bobchev continually referred, as Drinov had done some decades earlier, to things that were “Bulgarian and Slavic” and he spoke about Bulgarian history many times as being a “native and Slavic” one. At first glance, like Shishmanov, he admitted that Drinov’s thesis about the “Chudo-Finn descent” of the Bulgars of Asparuh later had been transformed in “Turkic theory” (“*тюркската теория*”). However, he emphasized that the “last word” on the topic had not been said. Moreover, whilst Shishmanov presented Drinov as a biased scholar, Bobchev still stressed his insight about how the proto-Bulgarians of Asparuh “imported political unity among the fragmented Slavic tribes” and how they were “swollen” into “this Slavic element.”⁸⁶

Shishmanov’s study also demonstrated a shift to phraseology, which included “race” as a legitimate scientific domain. At that time, international science legitimized the racial idea and it turned the concept of “race” into a respectable scientific category. In the academic discourse, the ideas of “race” and “ethnicity” existed side by side, intertwined and overlapping. This step to

84 Zlatarski (1902), p. 205.

85 *Ibid.*, pp. 214–219.

86 Bobchev (1909), p. 635.

“racialization” of science was not that unexpected. To a certain extent, there was always a risk involved that sciences in Bulgaria were deeply embedded in the paradigm of Romanticism. It is apparent that, like other scholars at the time, Shishmanov was not immune to the usage of contemporary terminology in describing past reality either. Several times, having discussed the descent of Old Bulgars, Shishmanov wrote about their “nation and language” [*narod-nostta i ezika*] and the “quarrel upon the nationality and the language of proto-Bulgarians” [*razprata vārhu natzionalnostta i ezika na prabālgarite*].⁸⁷ Moreover, in Shishmanov’s text the term “race” was overwhelmingly appropriated. Its meaning moved between “descent” and “group of people” with common origin. Shishmanov also expressed his own faith that it had been a mistake to draw some conclusions about the “race” of Old Bulgars only upon linguistic data. Following time’s fashion and referring to Kopernicki’s studies, Shishmanov used the term “Aryan,” “Aryan skulls,” “Semitic and Finn skulls” charging them with a scientific weight and not contesting their explanatory power. Nevertheless, as I have already mentioned, Shishmanov used the term “race” with a great fluidity and he took racial differentiation as being limited to physical characteristics without accepting race typology as an element of causal cultural explanation. Besides, Shishmanov clearly informed his readers that according to some new data announced by Niederle, the Slavs and the Germans had no “genetic difference.” He also added Bogdanov’s conclusion that the Slavs together with “the Germans, the Finns, and the Scythians” had a common descent in a “proto-European tribe.”⁸⁸ Therefore, it is evident that as science legitimized the idea of “race” it made it also very vulnerable in the case of changes in scientific outlook. A more attentive observer is able to see that science has its own internal dynamic. Its professionalization could lead to questioning and later disappearance of a primordial race of mythical ancestors. However, politics of culture and coming wars would put limits to this process.

This direction in the academic field increased a sense of “racial,” namely ethnic duality and even plurality in Bulgarian history. The awareness of ethnic complexity in their own past could encourage some Bulgarians to stress the benefits of racial and cultural mixture at least among the Europeans or among the “whites.” It could provoke in British or some French historiographic manner reluctance to attribute notions of racial and cultural purity in a more

87 Shishmanov (1900), p. 512 sqq, 556, 570.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 752.

German way. However, as far as “non-whites” were concerned, intermixture was definitely considered dangerous and disastrous. In fact, in the Bulgarian case, as we have seen, some important politicians and journalists had already stated publicly the benefits of this duality or plurality of “blood,” “talent” and “instinct.” However, perhaps the position of Old Bulgars on the European racial scale, combined with political conjecture and the traditional strong element of Slavism in Bulgarian national ideology, were obstacles to being able to subscribe more firmly to a similar vision. Moreover, in European *fin-de-siècle* fashion, “race” turned out to be, in an unprecedented way, a part of the Bulgarian intellectual environment. There is no space here to go into details, but the period after 1900 brought enthusiasm for racial interpretations combined with a hereditarian fervor. It was especially visible in journalism, non-academic historiography and literature, where these ideas were much more readily received, and became part of new directions in the thematization of the Bulgarian nation, political and cultural figures, different segments of the Bulgarian population and the “mapping” of certain regions. Undoubtedly, in many cases the new ways of making judgments were based on merely pre-modern ethnocentric and not racially conceived stereotypes and exclusions. However, they cannot be explained without adding the contribution of modern knowledge that paid attention to biological determinism and considered outward features and capacities as crucial differences of “racial groups.”

CONCLUSIONS

Despite some early examples, “race” and modern scientific racial thinking in Bulgaria was a latecomer. It is evident that in most of cases, theoretically and stylistically, Bulgarian thinkers and scholars depended on the influence of foreign authors. The sources of Bulgarian *fin-de-siècle* racial thought were a combination of Bulgarian ethnocentrism, the rise of Bulgarian national ideology, German Romanticism, Russian Slavophilism, different currents in French racial thought in science and literature, some interpretations of Social Darwinism, the ideas of heredity, etc. The ideas of the existence of “national soul,” “national spirit” or “national character” transmitted through biological processes were very often used metaphorically. However, in the beginning of the 20th century, these ideas legitimized biological determinism that appeared as fundamentally racial when it was applied to the idea of the nation. These ideas also brought about the rationalization of social and national hierarchies. In this respect, in the beginning of the 20th century, one can register the

prominence of natural and biological laws that had been more visible in other places in Europe since the 1880s.⁸⁹ Even so, racial ideas were used in Bulgaria in addition to other more basic cultural and historical arguments.

The racial thought borrowed from Western Europe was adapted and accommodated to serve the specific political and cultural purposes coming from the Bulgarian context. It should have helped Bulgarian leaders to situate their nation biologically among the “whites” and “Europeans.” Moreover, “Aryan myth,” which was somehow energized during the *fin-de-siècle*, situated some white races superior to others. In this regard, the other geneologies of the Old Bulgars put them not among Indo-Europeans but still among the whites (Ugro-Finn, Turkic, Turanian). To a certain extent, it was enough that they were not “Mongoloids” or “blacks.” It is worth thinking about the possible associations between Old Bulgars whose state was put north of the Caucasus and the “Caucasian race” from the textbooks in geography and history. And why not think about the beginning of appropriation, to a certain extent, of the European fascination of the East, Orient, and Asia? One should keep in mind that at the end of the 19th and the very beginning of the 20th centuries, there were voices that the Turanian or Finno-Japanese races were “the forerunners of civilization in Europe.”⁹⁰ Even in the 1870s the geographical textbooks, translated from Russian, represented the “Caucasian” and “Mongolian” as “races” common in Europe.⁹¹ Moreover, the Slavs as “ancestors” were considered enough to support and to underpin the Aryan disposition of the 20th-century Bulgarians. Even at this point, one comes across strategies that tried to represent the Slavs as equal or superior to the “Germans” through inverting the hierarchies.

In comparison with many other countries at the time the racial discourse in Bulgarian society was not that strong. Here one encounters less racial thinking in comparison with Central Europe and especially the Austrian part of the Habsburg monarchy from where some prominent racial thinkers originated. The Bulgarian case can be rather compared with the Hungarian one. There, according to Turda, the dissemination of racial thinking and Social Darwinism was not the work of intellectuals, but the product of a multitude of sources embedded within the Hungarian tradition of theorizing about the nation. At the same time, nationalist preoccupation with inner racial qualities in Bulgaria seems to have been weaker than in Hungary. In the Bulgarian case

89 Turda (2004), pp. 23–27.

90 See for example B. Bilmez’s contribution to this volume.

91 D. Lilova demonstrates this in her contribution published here.

it was more appropriation of racial and Social Darwinist vocabulary than genuine racial thinking.⁹² Most of the Bulgarian academics who adapted racial science did not subscribe to its value judgments but to some of its methods. For them it was more a purely scientific exercise with a sincere hope that these “racial” methods could help some scientific issues to be resolved better and would bring the scholars to the right answers. Moreover, most of the authors who somehow utilized the racial language and value judgments speculated on “race,” following a fashionable current of thought in Europe rather than subscribing firmly to racial ideas and prejudices typical of the time. Despite their inclinations to ethnic national perspective, the majority of the Bulgarian authors in humanities rejected racialism in the pseudo-scientific narratives. Historiography in Bulgaria was even linked less to biological and racialist ideas and more to the idea of a cultural nation. That is why other ethnic elements were not at the core of Bulgarian historical narrative. Moreover, the Bulgarian educated public was aware that there hardly existed a racially pure nation. In this regard, the Bulgarian case was not close to the German one, but to the context of other countries when the unification of “races” was seen as harmonious.⁹³ The Bulgarian case was close to the European states that were not preoccupied by racial mixture.

Changes in politics not always and not overwhelmingly brought changes in the interpretation of “ancestry,” especially in history textbooks and academic science. As far as scientists were concerned as individuals, they were the ones who elected—in this debate about the ancestors—which theory to support. Presumably, their participation was not determined solely by pure scientific motives. Although they were committed scholars, they also thought of themselves as Bulgarian “patriots.” However, they did not fulfil this task and they did not devote their craft to the “nation” in a way that several decades ago their forerunners had done. The above-mentioned combination of professionalization of science on the one hand, and the “racialization” of the public sphere on the other, were just a historical coincidence. The very political and cultural context as well as the configuration of international politics still made some constraints on the paradigm of “ancestry.”

92 For the Hungarian case, see Turda, (2004), pp. 161–162.

93 As M. Turda has recently shown, in Hungary at the time Vámbéry represented the mixture between Turanians and Aryans as a successful union between Europe and Asia, between Turanian herosim, on the one hand, and Aryan deligence and tenacity, on the other. See Turda (2004), p. 104.

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JOVAN JOVANOVIĆ ZMAJ AND THE SERBIAN IDENTITY BETWEEN POETRY AND HISTORY

BOJAN ALEKSOV

The recent violent outburst of Serbian nationalism has attracted significant interest in the ever-growing field of nationalism studies. In addition, the so-called “cultural turn” has engaged scholars in the reappraisal of significant aspects of Serbian culture, namely the ones that make it national, such as literature. Two writers—Petar Petrović Njegoš and Ivo Andrić—pillars of the Serbian literary canon, have naturally been debated the most and their works are often referred to either as illustrations of eternal hatred among South Slavs or as providing impetus for the conflicts.¹ Presenting part of this debate to an international audience, Celia Hawkesworth argued that the main problem of the recent reassessment of major literary figures in the former Yugoslavia was the inability of many commentators to separate the political from the artistic, something I believe is both impossible and futile. After all, the characters at stake here were not lonely riders. One was the spiritual and political leader of his (Montenegrin) state in the 19th century, and the other was the highest diplomatic representative of another (Yugoslav) state in the 20th century. Even more instrumental than their political positions was the influence of their literature on political imagining and identity building over the last two centuries. Nonetheless, their influence was not a one-way and one-dimensional phenomenon. Illuminating the interplay between the two is a task for both historians and literary critics.

In Serbian literature, as in that elsewhere, processes accompanying the building of the nation and its identity cannot be understood without proper exploration of several issues. These include the ideological and discursive practices of the national literature as well as modes of its canonization be-

¹ Two recent articles in English summarize the debates around these two authors—Hawkesworth (2002) and Wachtel (2004).

cause these factors have defined for individuals who they were and to whom they owed their loyalty. What and how we conceive of literature and literary criticism is rooted in a philological tradition, first formulated with the idea of nations in mind. It was precisely the political task of modern nationalism, according to Kedourie, that directed the course of literature, from the Romantic concepts of "folk character" and "national language" to the division of literature into distinct "national literatures."² In the formation of a national literary canon, which adopts or rejects writers and their works, national concerns have often weighed as heavily as literary ones, albeit not in a linear and conclusive process but in a dynamic, never-ending story of negotiation and modification.³ On the other hand, the rise of modern nation states has been inseparable from the forms and subjects of imaginative literature. As Benedict Anderson has demonstrated, the creation of print media, the newspaper and, especially, the novel were crucial factors in the formation of nations as "imagined communities."⁴

In Central and Eastern Europe, including the Balkans, the political context of the unresolved national and state issues in the 19th century and the belated and disputed development of the literary language determined the role of literature in the modern period. Romanticism, which offered the triumphant literary depiction of the nation, was the prevailing literary style almost until the end of the century. The role that the novel played in national representation and dissemination in Western Europe was replaced, in many literatures in this region, by oral poetry and its imitation.⁵ Poetry was valued more than any other genre and all artistic and creative minds were expected to express themselves in verse. A poet in the 19th century regarded himself (women poets in this period were exceptional) as the conscience, if not the leader, of his nation. In that sense the nations of Central and Eastern Europe headed by Germany came close to being unique in their adoration of poets. This was perhaps best expressed in the rituals of the exhumation, transfer and reburial of their bones, a practice that accorded them a saintly status. Serbian literature is a case in point. Serbian folk poetry as well as the poems written by Romanticist poets in the "folk" spirit were long privileged by the national system of education and generally considered to be the expression, or rather foundation, of national culture.

2 Kedourie (1960), p. 63. See also Lord (1963).

3 Kálmán (2001).

4 Anderson (1983), p. 12.

5 Szikláz (1977), pp. 331–332.

One poet, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj (1833–1904), attained extraordinary popularity, and thus is chosen to illustrate the argument of this study. During his lifetime, Zmaj had already acquired the title of the “people’s poet,” an expression of esteem held by the common Serb until today. A tireless publisher and editor of magazines and periodicals, for which he often supplied the whole contents, Zmaj imparted the image of a poet as national activist and acted as a key figure in the cultural and political life of the Serbs in Hungary, Croatia and Serbia during the entire second half of the 19th century. Today, however, he is usually remembered only as a national poet and only on the margins of political events. Revisiting Zmaj’s life and deeds in the pages that follow, I intend to show the ways in which literary, ideological and political concerns of men of letters related to, and informed, the Serbian national identity-formation. Often citing Victor Hugo as his ideal, Zmaj never distinguished between his poetic and political expression, believing this to be artificial. Zmaj’s unique popularity together with his expressed political engagement inspired the first part of this study. His ideas on the cluster of issues including language, people, state and religion will be reviewed in their historical context as well as against subsequent attempts to adjust or abandon them if they did not fit the dominant national narrative. Already during his life, but especially after his death, Zmaj’s place in the national canon was hailed but also questioned, not least because of his politics. This furnishes the fabric for the second part of the article. Using Zmaj and his *oeuvre* in this chapter, I shall highlight the many-sidedness and historical contingency of the identity construction. Within that context I shall question the common essentialist and deterministic views of a certain national culture and its political nationalism, be they critical or apologetic of its contents.

(UN)USUAL BIOGRAPHY OF THE PEOPLE’S POET

Jovan Jovanović was born in 1833 to a distinguished family in Novi Sad, then a predominantly Serbian town in southern Hungary where his father served as senator and, for a short time, as mayor after the 1848 revolution.⁶ His father came from a merchant family of Vlach origin, something neither Jovan Jovanović nor any of his contemporaries ever discussed, leaving us to assume

6 Biographies of Zmaj include Stajić (1933); Leskovac (1954); and Milisavac (1954).

that the family was fully assimilated or Serbianized.⁷ Nevertheless, the sheer number of assimilated Vlachs as prominent figures in the national movements of Southeastern Europe gives ground to speculation that their need to prove themselves as part of the nation contributed to their role as conspicuous 19th-century Balkan nationalists. Unlike many other Serbian writers or political activists of Vlach origin, who changed or Serbianized their originally Greek or Hebraic names, Jovan Jovanović only adopted what later became probably the most popular nickname among Serbs, Zmaj [dragon]. This came from the name of one of the many journals he edited. Later in his life he also introduced himself as Čika Jova (Zmaj)—Uncle Joe, a dear uncle to all Serbian children. For all Serbs this remained a name suggestive of his closeness to the people.

Zmaj's career differed little from that of any other urban middle-class son of his native Hungary at the time. He attended several high schools throughout the country and studied law at universities in Budapest, Prague, and Vienna before starting his career as a civil servant in southern Hungary. After several years he moved to Pest to head the Serbian educational foundation *Tekelijanum/Tökölyanum*, the post he abandoned in 1867 in order to take a degree in medicine. He spent the rest of his life practicing medicine in predominantly Serbian towns in south Hungary as well as in Belgrade, Zagreb and Vienna. As a physician he was remembered as a champion of the poor for whom he did not charge his services. Still, Zmaj the physician could not prevent, in less than ten years of marriage, his five children and eventually his wife succumbing to the diseases rampaging at that time, particularly tuberculosis. More than anything else, however, this tragedy gave Zmaj the sympathy of the common people who were still dying cruelly of known and unknown diseases, poverty, poor hygiene or from lack of proper medical care. From then on, according to Zmaj's own words, his heart was filled with the pain of his people, of all those who suffered and whose dignity was humiliated.⁸ Zmaj thus became a myth during his lifetime, although, as we will see later, the full force of the myth surfaced only after his death when he was no longer able to influence his own image.

Parallel to his medical practice, from the mid-1850s to his death in 1904, Zmaj was a most prolific and politically active Serbian man of letters. He was an editor and publisher of numerous literary and satirical journals, a writer of

7 For more on Vlachs, descendants of romanized pre-Slav Balkan population, see Winnifrith (1987).

8 Vrhovac (1933), p. 6.

short stories and plays and, most importantly, a poet. Zmaj's contribution as a translator is equally impressive. Beginning with the Hungarian Romantic poets Petőfi and Arany János, and later through his translations of major European poets such as Goethe, Tennyson, Lermontov and Hugo, he enriched tremendously Serbian literature despite the fact that literary critics no longer hold his translations in high esteem. His massive poetic opus is heterogeneous in its themes and genres but also of varied and disputed artistic value. Commonly praised are his lyrical, love and family poems published in collections named *Đulići* (Roses, 1864) and *Đulići uveoci* (Faded Roses, 1882). Whereas *Roses* is a lyrical diary or poetic novel about love and happy family life, *Faded Roses* is a book full of sadness and grief, stirred by the death of his wife and children. In addition, Zmaj published the following poem collections: *Pevanija* (Poems, 1882), *Čika Jova srpskoj deci* (Uncle Jova to Serbian children, 1889), *Čika Jova srpskoj omladini* (Uncle Jova to Serbian Youth, 1901) *Snohvatice* (vols. I–II, 1895; vol. III, 1900) and *Devesilje* (1900).⁹ The poems in these collections established Zmaj, in the words of the literary critic Jovan Skerlić, as “a program poet and freedom singer who was at the same time poet of hatred and revenge for the Serbian people and dreamer of human brotherhood, world peace and better humanity.”¹⁰ In this respect Zmaj stood clearly in line with the *Jungen Deutschland* movement and with one of his greatest poetic inspirations—Petőfi—for whom the emotion of “pure love” was not allowed and who saw “love for the people” as the true task of the poet. Even though Zmaj did not leave many expressly patriotic poems, he excelled in political and satirical poetry in which he expressed his political ideas and visions for the nation. Following European examples, the Serbian poets at that time saw themselves as speakers of the nation. Literary clubs were transformed into the first national political organizations and parties. Here former lovers of literature practised their political skills with more or less success but always following the same path leading from literature to politics. This shortcut to “glory” prompted one contemporary to lament the way many Serbian poets turned overnight into the worst political demagogues.¹¹

During the first half of the 19th century Zmaj's birthplace, Novi Sad, a free town with the largest Serbian population in the Habsburg Monarchy, became

9 Collected works appeared in 16 volumes as Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, *Sabrana dela*, Belgrade, 1933–1937, and selected works appeared in Novi Sad in 8 volumes in 1969 and in 10 volumes in 1983, edited by Mladen Leskovac.

10 Skerlić (1953), p. 289.

11 Rakić (1985), p. 94.

the centre of Serbian cultural life, earning the title of the Serbian "Athens." Nowadays it is often forgotten that, for almost half a century, the most important role in Serbian nation building was played by the Serbs from Hungary, with Zmaj in their midst. He grew politically by supporting the liberal United Serbian Youth and then the first political party of the Serbs in Hungary—the Serbian People's Freethinking Party (Liberals) led by Svetozar Miletić. Miletić remained Zmaj's political idol until the end of his life. Zmaj became a party poet, his poems often resembling daily political chronicles as emotional, versified commentaries of Miletić's political concepts. At one point in the 1880s, it seemed that Zmaj would even take over the role of Miletić and become the political leader of the Serbs in Hungary, but this attempt failed as he obviously did not have adequate skills. He soon returned to editing political journals, a task he was much more experienced in doing. Yet Zmaj's poetry, and especially his journalistic work, remained intertwined with political issues of the time, especially the most pressing one—the state of the nation—providing us with important insights into the interplay of literature and politics. What follows is the reconstruction of Zmaj's political and poetic persona and its ever-changing relationship to what was promoted as Serbian interests and immutable identity. In this enterprise, necessarily limited to a few major topics, one must begin with Zmaj's understanding of language, which determined not only his style of poetry but also his political views.

LANGUAGE AND NATION

Although he had studied in German and Hungarian, Zmaj never acquired proficiency in writing and expressing himself in these languages. Hardly any other Serbian writer ever did so. For Zmaj, the Serbian language remained his symbolic homeland and the guiding principle of his nationalism. Without education in his mother tongue, but obsessed with its beauty, Zmaj paradoxically became one of the most remarkable philologists of the Serbian language, master of rhyme, creator of neologisms, and certainly its most ardent glorifier. At the same time, the lack of proper linguistic knowledge and Zmaj's exaggerated passion for his language often turned to his disadvantage in terms of form or expression, hence the later criticisms of much carelessness and slovenliness in his work.

Zmaj entered Serbian literature after a long period of "discovering" the Serbian language, namely the creation of a literary language based on the vernacular. By inaugurating the vogue of folkloric collection that was reigning

throughout Europe, Vuk Karadžić, the father of modern Serbian literary language, also opened the way for a new period in Serbian cultural and literary development commonly associated with European Romanticism.¹² The celebration of the autochthonous features of the nation and the originality of its folk poetry was established in Western Europe in the 18th century by Rousseau, Macpherson, Percy and Herder in particular, and spread eastward through Vienna and the German universities.¹³ Moreover, the early Slavicists were influenced by the theory identifying the people with the language which was formulated by the German philologist Schläzer.¹⁴ Cherishing a European-wide enthusiasm for Karadžić's collections, the whole generation of poets which adopted Karadžić's language reform and kept alive his legacy became known as Vuk's Youth or *Vukovci*. Zmaj was at the forefront of this movement. An important aspect of the movement was the purification of the language as many poets desperately sought and invented words to replace foreign imports. An ardent collector of folklore in all its forms, Zmaj is also remembered as having contributed over 3,000 words to the *Dictionary of the Serbian Academy* (16 volumes starting from 1883). In the obituary which he wrote for Karadžić, Zmaj maintained that the folk song was not only the root of his own poetry, but of poetry in general.

In the Serbian case "singing," or the so-called song verse, meant lyric poetry, and verse romances stood for epic poetry for centuries. These Serbian oral narratives were usually composed in decasyllable poetic line and sung to the accompaniment of a single-stringed instrument known as the *gusle*.¹⁵ In the 19th century they might no longer have been sung but their versification and prosody endured. The wider public considered as poetry only that which preserved the "singing" tradition. Zmaj's popularity also rested on his use of the Serbian folk lyric meter. The taste and expectations of the audience directed authors such as Zmaj to adjust and harmonize their genres and forms with those of folk poetry even when its origins were far apart in time, space and cultural background. Along with the meter and verse, Zmaj also employed the lexica and idiomatic as well as the poetic syntax and expression of folk poetry. This often produced dubious results, especially his attempt to imitate folk poetry in the *Ijekavica* variant of the *Štokavian* dialect of Hercegovina, instituted by Karadžić as the purest form of Serbian language. The result was

12 See Duncan (1986), Turczynski (1976) and Hopf, (1997).

13 See Sundhaussen (1973) and Kessler (2002).

14 Ducreux (2005).

15 Koljevic (1980).

many lapses and errors in form, syntax and word choice. Recorded as having said that Serbian is not an earthly but a heavenly language, Zmaj stayed aloof of the debate waged throughout the 19th century about the proper grammar, orthography and lexica of the newly-codified vernacular language. Further, he rejected demands for linguistic purity among Serbian and Croatian writers, which later paved the way for the formation of their separate national literatures and identities. In his idealism Zmaj was a hostage of the Romanticist ideal for which, according to Joshua Fishman, the language was the key to unlocking ethnic greatness: with its liberating, unifying and authenticating features it represented the solution to all the problems of the modern era.¹⁶ It is therefore interesting to see how Zmaj's Romanticist idealization of the language and poetic tradition of the people influenced his understanding of the perennial problem of the territorial and national appropriation of that language. There is no better example than Zmaj's attitude towards Croats.

ZMAJ AND THE SERBO-CROATIAN PEOPLE

Accepting Karadžić's interpretation of Serbian and Croatian as one language, Zmaj deemed the Serbs and the Croats to be one people with two names or "brothers of one blood" and "sons of one mother" regardless of their confessional differences and the conflicts between their political elites.¹⁷ Hence he was very concerned with political developments in Croatia, the biggest region/autonomy in the Habsburg Monarchy inhabited by speakers of his mother tongue. In the early 1870s, when the status of Croatia within Hungary was renegotiated to the detriment of Croatian autonomy, Zmaj, together with other fellow Serb liberals from Hungary, vociferously demanded the closest possible political links between the Serbs and Croats in order to resist Hungarian interference. He placed his poetic talent in the service of that aim, extolling brotherhood, unity and harmony between Serbs and Croats. Zmaj's counterpart in promoting unity among Serbs and Croats was the greatest Croatian novelist at the time, August Šenoa. Praising Zmaj's poetry in 1879, Šenoa was persuaded that there was hope "that from today's sad quarrel among the members of one tribe, Croats and Serbs, one day something better

¹⁶ Fishman (1986), p. 76.

¹⁷ As expressed in Zmaj's poem *Kad već mora*, written in 1884, published in Jovanović (1975), pp. 48–49.

and nobler might arise based on mutual familiarity, recognition and respect.”¹⁸ Like Zmaj, Šenoa believed that the political antipathy between the Serbs and the Croats might be resolved in time and through education, with a special role attached to literature. But as the years went by, such voices of prominent Serbian and Croatian artists and poets had little effect because the political and clerical representatives of the two peoples could not reconcile their interests, choosing instead separate political and national paths. Whereas almost all Croatian parties and groupings denied any separate national rights to the Serbs in Croatia, the Serbian leaders, by supporting the Hungarian government party, made any progress towards Croatian statehood impossible. Zmaj, however, urged the Serbs to help the Croats without trying to gain advantages from the Croats’ difficulties, exhorting:

Tender a hand to the suffering Croat,
Tell him he has a brother in need;
Let brotherly love show its benefits true,
And then let them decide what they want to do.¹⁹

In reaction to this, the Serbian bishop Teofan Živković, a bitter opponent of Zmaj’s ideal of unity, wrote that Zmaj would have done better to have kept silent. *Srbski narod*, a journal close to the Serbian Patriarch Andelić, even accused Zmaj of inciting an anti-Hungarian rebellion in Croatia in 1883. In spite of this misapprehension, Zmaj remained instrumental in attempts to overcome the bitter relations between Croats and Serbs. Because of his record in promoting cooperation and accord, he was courted by the Croatian bishop Strossmayer and other prominent Croatian opponents of Hungarian rule. They asked him to persuade the Serbian liberal leaders to join an electoral coalition. Zmaj responded positively through a number of intercessions, but also worked on his own, agitating among the Serbian and the Croatian youth. He was fearful that some heedless nationalist youngsters could spoil the efforts of elders at reconciliation. In 1887, with the financial help of the Montenegrin Prince Nikola, Zmaj tried to launch a journal named *Jugoslavija*, the first ever with such a name. Its aim was to propagate the union of the Balkan peoples and lands, but this effort failed before the first issue even appeared. None of these attempts in the 1880s bore any success. Furthermore, party

18 Cited in Živančević (1983), p. 433.

19 Krestić (1997), p. 318.

machinations and squabbles, coalitions for material gains or a single deputy position pushed Serbian and Croatian parties away from any collaboration for decades.

In his last attempt to foster rapprochement between the Serbs and the Croats in 1897, Zmaj even moved to Zagreb. Hoping to achieve justice and also reconcile the two peoples, he coined the term "Serbo-Croatian" or "Croato-Serb" for his people. At the time this term was odd but was later accepted in Socialist Yugoslavia as the official name for the language spoken by Serbs and Croats. Criticizing the anti-Croatian editorial policy of the Serbian journal in Zagreb, Zmaj rejected the editors' explanation that they were just responding to attacks from Croats. Zmaj also opined that differences in upbringing, characteristics of the people, and views and preferences were the result of foreign rule over centuries. Furthermore, he claimed that since it was scientifically proven that Serbs and Croats spoke the same language, this would sooner or later extinguish inflamed passions and reconcile disparate positions, despite all the efforts of Vienna to poison their relations.²⁰

Paradoxically, the divisions between the Serbian and the Croatian political circles erupted into riots on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Zmaj's literary work in Zagreb in 1899. The Serbian nationalists in Croatia organized the celebrations, ignoring the Croats, and in their speeches praised Zmaj's work as the best symbol under which to achieve the most solid unity of the Serbian lands.²¹ The Croatian nationalists, on the other hand, tried everything to prevent the celebrations. The activists of the extreme Right, the so-called Frankists, staged demonstrations and attacked Serbian institutions. Their attempts to violently disrupt the celebrations were deterred by representatives of the Serbian and Croatian youth of Dalmatia, in what turned out to be the first demonstration of the future, albeit short-lived movement, in which the struggle of the two peoples was conjoined. After the ill-fated anniversary Zmaj withdrew to Sremska Kamenica, a town just across the Danube from his native Novi Sad, and until his death mostly wrote poems for children. It was only after Zmaj's death, in 1904, that the initiatives aimed at the political and cultural unification of South Slavs got underway. In the following years it became a favorite political activity and was transformed into a widespread movement among the South Slav cultural elites, ending up with the creation of the Yugoslav state after the First World War.

20 Cited in Krestić (1987), p. 46.

21 Krestić, (1997), pp. 387–389.

From today's perspective, Zmaj's life itinerary as a symbolic path of unity between Zagreb and Belgrade seems to be an aberration in a trend whereby the two cities have grown into clearly distinct cultural and literary centers. Zmaj's belief in the naturalistic determinism of language as the most profound expression of national spirit clashed with parallel identification strategies based on confessional and historical allegiances. Zmaj was ready to accept a certain individuality for Croats for the sake of unity, especially in view of foreign threats. At the same time he opined that belonging to the Serbian nation should replace the religious identification of Serbian (or Serbo-Croatian) speakers; extending this suggestion to Muslim *Bošnjaks* [Bosniaks] as well.

Eventually dialectical variations, the use of different (Cyrillic or Latin) alphabets and, especially, the distinct historical, religious and political backgrounds of the Serbian and the Croatian literatures kept them apart. This despite the fact that linguistically, Serbian and Croatian were, in the opinion of most people and experts, one language, and the fact that their speakers lived on adjacent territories. Contrary to the theory that language is the most important and organic component of an ethnic cluster, it was not the ultimate or crucial factor in unification or ethnic homogenization in many cases throughout Europe. Instead, the idea of peoples as communities of ancient historic statehoods in many case held sway.²² In the case of South Slavs, the language not only failed to bring about unification or ethnic homogenization but, according to the linguist Ranko Bugarski, the struggle over the language, which lasted for almost two centuries, acted as a cover for other deep-seated conflicts and aspirations of a political and economic nature.²³ Let us now therefore turn to how other political and ideological currents of the time shaped, and were shaped by, the identity-building process.

ROMANTICIST NATIONALISM AND LIBERALISM

Romanticism, which fashioned Zmaj's whole *oeuvre*, was the first artistic movement in which the small nations could proudly take part. Their folk poetry especially was praised as the "People's Gospel" or, in the words of a Zmaj's biographer, "people's poetic temple, in which young and old, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, can pray to their own and not to a foreign God."²⁴

22 See Eötvös (1851) which later also influenced political thinking in Croatia.

23 Bugarski (2004), p. 4.

24 Stajić (1930), p. 42.

No matter how traditionalist and conservative the formal and conceptual elements might have been, the imagery and subject matter of folk poetry offered new modes of expression and enabled the new generation of poets to defy ecclesiastical and other constraints. Furthermore, because of the belief in its unchanged existence over time, folk poetry served best to evoke the mythologized past. In a development that is not unique in this part of Europe because of the lack of independent political fora, poets took on political functions. They found folklore to be a useful political means in their struggle for an independent culture and, indirectly, independent national existence. Celebrating the vitality of the people and past glory, Romanticism justified revolutionary nationalist aims expressed in poetic terms of awakening, rise and revival.

Yet, whereas the historical and national goals of the Germans, the Italians and to a great extent the Hungarians were accomplished during the 1860s and 1870s, the Serbian efforts spearheaded by the United Serbian Youth—where youth was a synonym for liberal—came to an abrupt halt after the Congress of Berlin (1878). This congress left the Serbs scattered in four states. Following the example of Germany and Italy, where national unification came only after cultural unity was achieved, Zmaj continued his mission hoping that cultural unity would eventually bring about a political one. Writing to his publisher, Zmaj explained his poetry and editorial work as enlightening and educating children but also as building cultural and national ties across political borders. This would connect spiritually the Serbs in Hungary, Serbia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Montenegro and Bosnia and keep their spirit of freedom alive so that they could respond to future developments and social progress.²⁵ Many issues affecting Serbs in Hungary—their unresolved status, their loss of rights, weakening of Church and educational autonomy—along with the turmoil in other countries inhabited by Serbs prompted Zmaj to abandon most of the experimentation of his earlier poetry. Political concerns influenced his stylistic and thematic choices, ushering in a poetry of expressed patriotism and positive self-reliance. This is the message of Zmaj's famous poem *Grandfather and Grandson*, which glorified an ancient single-stringed musical instrument, the *gusle*, thus epitomizing the folk spirit and tradition as a source of national rebirth. The ideas of *literati* such as Zmaj clearly contributed to the emergence of the particular Serbian view of political liberalism. Liberalism evolved as a hybrid of its Western prototype and the indigenous Romantic populism drawing upon the glorification of the traditional democratic "popu-

25 Prepiska (1957), pp. 310–314.

lar" institutions, with national liberation as its major concern.²⁶ Instead of the principles of liberal contractualism, the Serbian liberals opted for the ideas of German Romanticism which emphasized an organic complex of historical elements that made up the spirit of a people such as race, language, religion, customs, etc. Similarly the idea of folk poetry as the manifestation of the true spirit of the people was translated into the political vision of popular democracy. The major elements of liberal doctrine—parliamentary government, equality, rule of law and responsible executive—were considered derivative of the crucial notion of popular sovereignty. On the other hand patriarchal institutions such as the extended family, rural community, local self-government, collective work, and the collectivistic ethos which they nurtured, were politically instrumentalized.

Imbuing folk-style poetry with the modern idea of national values, independence and even superiority, Zmaj's poems often produced pathetic undertones. Unlike his poetic idol Petőfi, Zmaj's lyrics hardly ever overcame their Romantic inspiration and attained a proper level of realism. His political preferences determined the idealized images of the people Zmaj conveyed. Only in his children's poetry did Zmaj approach reality. In it he rendered unforgettable scenes and characters, and it was for this that he was said to be the inventor of childhood in Serbian literature. Proudly situating himself in the tradition of the Enlightenment, Zmaj described his role as that of Benjamin Franklin's messenger and in his verses acted against all the evils of his time—poverty, misery, exploitation, injustice and deceit.²⁷ The journals he edited and their limited readership were often the only public for his ideas and the only place to discuss these problems, despite their being subjected to strict censorship by the Habsburg Monarchy. In them Zmaj published his own political manifestos, pledging to promote truth and justice, extol diligence, solidarity and the common good while castigating and ridiculing duplicity, charlatanism, egoism, conservatism, superciliousness, malice and disunity.²⁸ In all of his poetic-political work Zmaj strove to fill the vacuum created by what children could not learn in school or what political parties avoided bringing up. In his programmatic poetry Zmaj tried to follow Victor Hugo who denounced social evils in his prose and journalistic accounts. But, as it is often the case, social commitment does not necessarily mean artistic accomplishment. Zmaj's poems, impelled by current affairs, written quickly with a militant passion, and

26 For Serbian liberalism, see Stokes (1975), Mishkova (2001) and Subotić (1992).

27 Ostojić (1908), p. 7.

28 See Milinčević (1989) and Maticki (1990).

obsessed with the idea of pointing to a problem and advocating a solution meant they were often simplistic, superficial, and purely didactic—if not demagogic. Zmaj voluntarily sacrificed his vocation as a poet on the altar of politics and the nation. However, the notion of “nation” changed immensely during the century after his death and those in charge of the nation often obfuscated Zmaj’s ideas as will be illustrated below.

A MAN OF TWO “HOMELANDS”

Zmaj began his career as a translator in 1855 when he first translated short poems by Sándor Petőfi. This was followed by his major work, *János Vitéz*, and in 1858 by the translation of another great Hungarian epic—János Arany’s *Toldi*. For these and many other translations of Hungarian poets, Zmaj was elected in 1867 to the Hungarian Kisfaludy Literary Society [*Kisfaludy Társaság*], which then sponsored the translation of his poems into Hungarian. Zmaj dedicated the Hungarian edition of his poems to the idea of Hungarian-Serbian brotherhood, expressing his hope that mutual sharing and learning about the life and the spiritual treasury of the two peoples would overcome damage done by the sad past and present politics.²⁹ In his poems and correspondence, Zmaj referred to Hungary as his dear homeland, reflecting the widespread pro-Hungarian sentiments of the Serbs in the 1850s and 1860s. These were his formative years when, after years of Austrian absolutism, the Serbs hoped their interests would be better protected under the Hungarian liberals than they had been by the conservative Crown.³⁰ It was a dramatic rupture with a centuries’ long reliance on the Habsburgs which is best illustrated by the political program of Svetozar Miletić. Proclaimed in 1860, it demanded the equality of peoples in Hungary, respect for their existence and differences as well as for their language and identity. Yet Hungarian liberals disapproved of Miletić’s call for the institutional status of Serbs, reducing the whole issue to matters of mother-tongue education and the right to use Serbian in Serb-majority counties. Relationships between the two political elites soon deteriorated and Zmaj was caught between his fervent Serbian nationalism and his loyalty to the Hungarian state. In a letter to the famous Hungarian writer Mór Jókai written in 1875, when relations with Hungarians reached its

29 Pot (1993), p. 108.

30 Poth (1968), pp. 336–337.

lowest point, Zmaj expressed hope that politics would not contaminate literature which knew better what was “mine, yours, his.”³¹ After the crisis of 1875–1878, Zmaj participated again in Hungarian cultural and political life. Honors and translations of his work by Hungarian writers continued despite Zmaj’s staunch criticism of Hungarian politics, especially the policy of Magyarization. Hungarian *literati* celebrated pompously the 40th anniversary of Zmaj’s work in 1889. As a sign of gratitude, Zmaj translated the famous drama *Az ember tragédiája* [The Tragedy of Man] by Imre Madách. On a more personal note, after the death of his wife, Zmaj lived with his Hungarian housekeeper, Mária Tarnóczy, and most probably fathered one and raised both of her two daughters; information later cleansed from the poet’s biography.³²

What complicates most this attempt by Zmaj to locate the meaning of national belonging within parameters established later is that he never bothered with territorial issues. The closest he came to explaining his view of the position of the Serbian minority in Hungary was in 1881 when he rejected criticism about his reporting on Hungarian politics and cultural events in his magazine for children, *Neven*:

We are in Hungary, political conflicts are temporary and might change tomorrow—but we will stay here so why not let our children know about their immediate environment!? Because it is not Serbian!? I believe I am a good Serb but I will not go as far. I want my young audience to be Serbs, but not only Serbs and nothing more.³³

During the socialist period, Zmaj’s activism in Hungary and his translations were used in both Hungary and Yugoslavia as evidence of the brotherhood of the two peoples. On the other hand, Serbian nationalist historiography and literary criticism usually ignored Zmaj’s double loyalty completely. The problem was that Zmaj’s ideas about people, nation and state scarcely fitted in with the firmly established notion that all political national movements in Hungary were separatist. The Serbian narrative of liberation from foreign domination and of unification in a nation state had to be reconciled with the fact that the Serbs in Hungary, who were culturally and economically the most advanced of all Serbs, were not irredentist and did not agitate for violence in achieving their political goals. Not surprisingly, the Hungarian government

31 Prepiska (1957), pp. 161–162.

32 Zmajev bečki dnevnik (1983), pp. 221–222.

33 Prepiska (1957), pp. 304–306.

treated them as the least dangerous of all nationalities. The Serbian parties were deeply divided and were losing one election after the other, while many prominent Serbs supported the Hungarian Government right up until the First World War. In addition, many Serbs performed military, police and administrative functions. An interesting account recorded in Zmaj's diary is the testimony of Miletić's daughter describing how her father was arrested in 1876 by a Hungarian state prosecutor, Vasa Popović, a judge called Jerković, and the Novi Sad police chief Maša Manojlović; all of them apparently of Serbian ethnic background.³⁴

Serbian historiography successfully resolved the paradox by enforcing a clear division between cultural nationalists such as Zmaj, who maintained strong attachment to purely Serbian political parties, on the one hand, and the so-called magyarophile intellectuals and elites, who associated themselves with the Hungarian elites on the other. Because of these two clearly polarized camps the nationalist narrative could always take the "right" side and celebrate the role of the cultural nationalists in the "liberation" struggle. By so doing, the loyalty of Zmaj or other cultural nationalists to the Hungarian state never entered the picture—nor did their Hungarian patriotism. This "wisdom" fully ignored the fact that only the cataclysm of the First World War made possible the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the unification of South Slavs. Posthumous celebrations of Zmaj also saw a twist of irony in the fact that Zmaj's most enchanted hymns to freedom were not his own but translations of Hungarian and German ones.³⁵ But in fact there was nothing ironic that a cultural nationalist, such as Zmaj, cherished the richness of the poetry of peoples with whom Serbs had lived and in whose culture and literature he felt at home—even if that meant using German and Hungarian lyrics to denounce oppression by the Austrian or the Hungarian Government.

Another important moment complicates the "national" profile of the people's poet. Pugnacious critic of the Hungarian Government and defender of national, political and cultural rights of the Hungarian Serbs, Zmaj attacked with equal ferocity both the government and ruling monarchs of Serbia and the conservative (Serbian) Church hierarchy within the Monarchy for their corruption, misuse of power, authoritarianism, etc. Zmaj insisted on differentiation between the state and the people and this was best illustrated by the polemic he had with the editor of *Srpski list* [Serbian Magazine], "a journal

34 Zmajev bečki dnevnik (1983), pp. 230–232.

35 Milutinović (1933), p. 7.

for the defense of Serbian interests in Dalmatia” as its subtitle read.³⁶ Zmaj was scandalized by the reporting of the journal which in the mid-1880s supported the ruling regime in Serbia despite its repression of political opponents. He insisted that a good image of Serbia was crucial in the struggle for self-determination and independence of Serbs in Austria-Hungary. For Zmaj, however, the wish to promote a different image of Serbia was no substitute for universal democratic values, which he believed were so blatantly disregarded in Serbia. This might also explain why, despite his pronounced opposition to the Hungarian state and growing discontent with the conditions for Serbs there, Zmaj never seriously considered moving to Serbia. His stay in Belgrade on a Serbian state invitation and with the prestigious position of dramatist of the National Theatre did not last long. After two years he left for Vienna, disillusioned by intrigues around him and disappointed at not being able to get Serbian citizenship or edit a journal in Belgrade.³⁷

Concerning Serbian politics in Hungary, Zmaj had equally little understanding. As a child of Romanticism, he believed in harmony and the essentially good nature of the people. With such a view, he considered conflicts that arose in the Serbs’ struggle for political emancipation as aberrations, and not an inevitable accompaniment to any politics. The ones he deemed responsible for the aberrations Zmaj easily castigated as traitors. In the 1880s, when it became evident that the Liberal block in Hungary could not hold itself for long, Zmaj agitated vocally to prevent the split. However, his letters, speeches, articles and verses demonstrated rather his *naïveté* and inability to adjust to modern politics. He belonged to a party that he believed was representing the interests of the whole Serbian national movement, democracy and freedom, and could hardly conceive of a plurality of adversarial political parties. Eventually he took the side of the more radical faction, the young Socialists, who later became known as the Radicals.³⁸ Crucial for Zmaj’s decision was their abandoning socialist ideas and the adoption of radical nationalism and anticlericalism as their political badge. This decision cost Zmaj the loss of many of his previous friends and party colleagues who remained in the Liberal party after the split. Old and sick, Zmaj became a Radical deputy and they used his name and fame abundantly in their promotion and daily political squabbles. Throughout his life, Zmaj preached unity among Serbs but ended up being accused by one of his formerly closest friends of have fallen in the mud of

36 Leskovac (1988).

37 Kostić (1951), Zmajev bečki dnevnik (1983), p. 242.

38 Rakić (1985), Milan Šević (1926) and Polit-Desančić (1936).

human evil and malice.³⁹ The exalted nationalism of the Radical party, which Zmaj joined, had little to do with the incipient nationalism of the early liberalism. Instead, it excelled in myth making, attacking critical historiography and denouncing intellectuals as traitors. It even soothed Zmaj's criticism of the government in Serbia and made him, in his old age, sing the praises of the Serbian monarch and his wife. Here, as in so many other cases, Zmaj is a good example of how nationalism checked liberalism in Serbian nation building. In the case of women, for example, Zmaj preached that they should be innocent, clean and caring and fulfill their traditional roles. He denied them the right to vote but supported their public activity as long as he considered it to be good for the nation. Similarly Zmaj was a declared pacifist but had a different stance towards the Ottoman Empire. There, his fellow Serbs had all the right to rebel with arms and throw off the Turkish yoke they had borne for centuries. In his poems, Zmaj added a new dimension to the eternal conflict with the Turks by treating Serbian folk poetry as part of the struggle for independence, as protection of Europe from the Heathen, and even using it to justify the superiority of one's culture. According to his contemporary, the poet Laza Kostić, Zmaj contributed to the construction of the view of Turks as *Erbfeind*, thereby exacerbating popular resentment.⁴⁰ Zmaj also published several anti-Semitic poems in his journals. Whether his own or translations from German and Hungarian originals, these poems testify to the prevailing anti-Semitic atmosphere of the period to which Zmaj, a declared enlightener and philanthropist, also subscribed. Finally, one aspect of Zmaj's political persona deserves special attention since it is paradigmatic of how influential *literati*, literary topics and fashions were in political thinking and action. Despite that, it is an issue which was later completely obliterated—illustrating how contingent nationalist ideas and national identities can be.

SERBIAN NATIONALISM AND ANTI-CLERICALISM

As a professed liberal, Zmaj appropriated and radiated many of the ideas unleashed by the Enlightenment and revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries: republicanism, anti-militarism, pacifism, and most virulently, anti-clericalism. Following the model in French novels of the period, priests and

39 Rakić (1985), p. 87.

40 Kostić (1902), p. 441.

monks were regular targets of Zmaj's criticism and satire—be it for voracity in matters of eating and drinking, be it for sexual transgressions, be it for its hypocrisy in matters of national interest.⁴¹ The political, intellectual and artistic condemnation of churches in Europe, which came with the secularization of social thought, was one of the most important intellectual consequences of the Enlightenment. The separation of socio-political and religious thought did not have to mean the denial of the latter but the historical role of the churches and their opposition to liberal reforms brought about rampant anti-clericalism. This spread from France to all parts of the continent in late 19th-century Europe, a period described as the golden age of anti-clericalism.⁴² Zmaj spearheaded it in the Serbian case and soon the whole genre of mocking the Church and priests evolved among Serbian *literati*. It was taken further by politicians such as Svetozar Miletić, Jaša Tomić and Laza Kostić. They struggled against the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church in Hungary and turned the two most important Serbian institutions of the period—*Matica srpska* and the Liberal Party—into bastions of anti-clericalism.

Yet, in the context of Serbian politics and culture in Hungary, as in much of the region, it is impossible to speak about the division of the religious and secular spheres and the secularization of social thought in the same way as in France where the genre originated. True, most of the changes in the religious sphere in the Habsburg Monarchy, later known as *Josephinismus*, were made in the secularizing spirit of the Enlightenment. But the link between church and state and the state's control over the church in the Habsburg domain was reinforced with the Josephinist reform so that the Catholic, and to a similar extent the other recognized churches, including the Orthodox Church, remained key institutions in governing people; both in controlling them and providing for their welfare. While secular Serbian intellectuals had already begun clashing with the Church on many issues in the 18th century, ecclesiastical power emerged as a major issue in the 1860s with the formation of the Liberals. They promulgated the view that the Orthodox Church, like any other church, was the natural enemy of freedom of conscience. More importantly they repudiated its dependence on the Court and the Hungarian Government. Yet, this anti-clericalism was less of a striving for a lay state than an attempt to take over the political authority and power of the Church and convert it into a national institution.⁴³ Influenced by the rhetoric of radical French anti-

41 Vučenov (1983), p. 441.

42 Rémond (1983), p. 123.

43 For the conflicts over the Serbian Church autonomy, see Bremer (1992).

clericalists, the Serbian Liberals in fact followed instead the Josephinist tradition of not destroying the Church but subduing it by transforming the institution of church autonomy. Zmaj also attacked the hierarchy very sharply for being in the service of foreign rulers and usurping such autonomy. More mercilessly, Zmaj attacked Patriarch German Anđelić who was imposed by the Hungarian Government against the will of the autonomous institutions. He played with the meaning of Anđelić's name (meaning "little angel"), calling him a little devil instead. In a famous poem, Zmaj warned the Serbs to hide their children if the Patriarch was passing by so that the children did not get contaminated and poisoned with his evil.

A staunch anti-clericalist, Zmaj was at the same time a deeply religious person. This was almost unique among Serbian intellectuals of the period. In a collection of Serbian religious poems, which appeared in 1902, Zmaj's poems comprised more than half of all entries.⁴⁴ In Christianity Zmaj primarily saw humanism, the resolution of social contradictions, the humane reconstruction of the world, and harmony with nature. In his poem *Jest* [Truth] he came close to Tolstoyan ideas, rejecting the famous verse "render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar" (Matt 22:21) and proposing instead "render unto People what belongs to People." Inspired by other Romanticists such as Novalis and Chateaubriand, Zmaj condemned the bigotry and mysticism of traditional religion and extolled the values of justice, modesty and sincerity. Mediating foreign influences, Zmaj was also an ardent advocate of cremation; a pioneer of this cause among the Serbs. No issue showed his attitude to religion better than his relationship with the Nazarenes. This relationship brought huge controversy for him during his lifetime but, along with his anticlericalism, was later erased in public memory.

The Nazarenes were the first new religious movement or sect to arise in Hungary after the 16th century, distinguished for their rejection of the priesthood, infant baptism and transubstantiation as well as for refraining from military service and politics, and refusing to take an oath.⁴⁵ The bulk of the converts were found in southern Hungary where they attracted members of numerous ethnic minorities—the Orthodox Serbs being the most prone to conversion. The success of Nazarene proselytizing in matters religious lay in the combination of their communitarian morality, work ethic, the proximity of their beliefs to older folk-notions of religion, and a gripping emotionalism.

44 Šević (1902).

45 On the Nazarenes, see Aleksov (2006).

They used everyday language in their services and Serbian Nazarenes spread and read the Bible in the vernacular as translated by Vuk Karadžić and Đura Daničić. Furthermore, Serbian converts were attracted by the Nazarenes' anticlericalism and lay-centered religion. They were especially nurtured by its criticism of the common laxity of nominal Christianity, the idleness of the clergy and especially the decay in the Orthodox Church. Disassociating themselves from the Orthodox and other established churches described in this way, everyone willing to join them was offered an opportunity to learn to read and write and also to speak about as well as interpret their own spiritual experience. A great share of the enormous success of the spread of the Nazarenes was attributed to Zmaj for his beautiful translation of their hymnal, the *Zion's Harp*, which appeared in 1878.⁴⁶ These were the first religious hymns in the vernacular Serbian Orthodox Church's services. The earlier hymns and translations from Greek into Church Slavonic were often incomprehensible and, as even priests would confirm, did not satisfy people's religious longings. When Nazarene hymns appeared in Zmaj's translation, he was already one of the most beloved poets whose verses many Serbs knew by heart and accepted as folk poems. Approaching Serbian villagers, the Nazarene preachers were now recorded reciting Zmaj's hymns from their songbook in place of theological explanations.

The Orthodox Church was scandalized and launched a campaign against Zmaj, blaming him for covetousness and sacrilege committed out of sheer material interest. The hierarchy of the Serbian Metropolitanate boycotted Zmaj and the seminarians wondered how to admire the popular poetry of a heretic. Church accusations of Zmaj's greediness as the reason for his involvement with the Nazarenes were absurd to say the least, considering his position in literary establishment. The acceptance of Zmaj's hymns, as was pointed out in a booklet by a rare supporter, can easily be explained by his own religious poetry which shares many of the same motifs as the Nazarene hymns, such as condemnation of church ritual, clericalist mischief and a general contempt of religious intermediaries.⁴⁷ Yet unlike Tolstoy, Zmaj never broke away from the Orthodox Church. In his statement responding to attacks many years later, Zmaj was sorry if his translations of the Nazarene hymns were used to the detriment of the Orthodox Church, but remained firm in his belief that they were beautiful, sincere and truly devotional—asserting

46 *Harfa Siona* (1878).

47 Maksimović (1911).

that they could be beneficial for the Orthodox Church as well. Moreover, although he praised the religious and literary quality of Nazarene hymns, Zmaj never wrote a word defending the Nazarenes from the constant maltreatment by both civil and church authorities; obviously fearing the political consequences of a mass fall away of Serbs to the ranks of sectarians. This lack of reaction is illustrative of how Zmaj and Liberals readily sacrificed their views for the national cause. The domination of the *raison d'État* or *raison de la nation* in the attitude towards the Church brought much success to the Liberals and later their radical splinter group as they attained power in church institutions and transformed the Orthodox Church's autonomy for their cause. Yet their success was bitter. The importance of Serbian autonomy was increasingly marginalized by the Hungarian Government, leading to its abolition in 1912. Moreover, the struggle over church autonomy as the chief preoccupation of Serbian secular parties contributed to the identification of Orthodox church and Serbian nation in clerical and conservative discourses, which was finally cemented in the interwar period. In the new circumstances the Church hierarchy reversed all gains made by the Liberals. A series of reforms progressively abolished the participation of lay people, culminating in the Serbian Orthodox Church being the sole among Orthodox churches in which the hierarchy had all the power while the lower clergy and lay people had none. A century later, Serbian nationalism was much more clericalist; belonging to Orthodoxy and, especially, the institution of the Serbian Orthodox Church made up the core of self-identification.

RECEPTION OF ZMAJ IN HIS LIFETIME—AND POSTMORTEM

Zmaj's poetry and visions expressed in verse reached the common folk, or at least its literate portion, through the most common reading matter of the time—calendars and almanacs. The calendar with the widest circulation, *Orao* [Eagle], introduced a selection of Zmaj's poetry in 1875 with the title *Great People's Poet*, a sort of *terminus post quem* for dating Zmaj's immense popularity as well as an inspiration for the title of this study.⁴⁸ Zmaj became a synonym for the poet and his poetry became the property of the people. Many of his poems were sung as popular songs whose origins had been forgotten. His

48 Maticki (1990), p. 526.

poetry was extensively translated into Hungarian and German and even spread across the ocean when in 1894, the most distinguished scientist of Serbian origin, Nikola Tesla, published a collection of Zmaj's poems in America.⁴⁹

The literary establishment and critics were more restrained. The Croatian writer Jagić criticized Zmaj as early as 1867 for spending his talent on humorous and ephemeral political poetry instead of writing serious lyrics.⁵⁰ In 1893 one of the first Serbian professional literary critics, Ljubomir Nedić, opened the period in which Zmaj's work was denied recognition of any artistic value and poetic talent.⁵¹ For Nedić, Zmaj was more of a "versificator," a virtuoso in assembling rhymes and producing prose in verses, than a poet or an artist. Nedić rejected Zmaj's playing on words and his use of sophism and syllogism—all deemed to be products of the mind and not of emotions which should be the chief inspiration for poetic imagination. Zmaj's satirical verses on political issues that made him so famous now brought him the sharpest criticism. Despite acclaim in popular circles, Zmaj was admitted into the Serbian Royal Academy of Sciences only in 1896 after several failed attempts. Some distinguished academics opposed this decision, criticizing Zmaj's populism, radical republicanism and his poetry which they perceived as ephemeral. The President of the Academy, Milan Milićević, in his *laudatio* in the presence of both the Serbian King and the Montenegrin Prince, emphasized Zmaj's extraordinary contribution to children's poetry.⁵² This portrayal of Zmaj as mainly a children's poet, established at the end of the 19th century, has remained unquestioned until the present.

The celebrations of Zmaj's anniversaries—occasions for both literary figures and common people to pay respect and confirm his status—were also marred by incidents, not just in Zagreb as we saw, but also in his native Novi Sad. The celebration organized by *Matica srpska* in 1899 turned into the greatest scandal of Serbian literary history. Zmaj's long-time political and literary companion, Laza Kostić, was chosen to deliver the *laudatio* but instead he delivered a bitter pill for the festive audience, stunned by its unusually critical tone. Kostić later wrote a whole book to clarify and justify his position, unleashing a debate which continued for more than a century. Many

49 *Songs of Liberty and Other Poems* (1897); see also Tesla (1894).

50 Milinčević (1989), p. 221.

51 Ljubomir Nedić (1893).

52 Vukčević (1983).

Serbian writers and literary critics felt the responsibility to take a stand.⁵³ In his study, Kostić distinguished between Zmaj the nightingale, the poet of the soul, and Zmaj the dragon, prosaic and in service of daily politics. Eventually the dragon consumed the nightingale, lamented Kostić, since Zmaj did not understand and did not want to understand the difference between two kinds of passions—the transient folk passion (or the momentary uproar of the plebs), and the eternal, primal passion of the poet (or the inspiration and aptitude for poetic passion). Kostić warned that language is an organism that cannot be negotiated, as Zmaj thought, for the good of the people. In order to stress rhyme with his laconic word choice, Zmaj, according to Kostić, destroyed many a trope and poem with his carelessness, laziness and slovenliness. Furthermore, his “folklorism” often buried him in the conventionalities of the form. More bitterly, Kostić rebuked Zmaj’s political judgments, his obsession with traitors, and lack of principle. Kostić illustrated this with Zmaj’s staunch opposition to the death penalty while at the same time wishing only death to the “Turkish occupiers” in his patriotic poems. Zmaj even advocated the conversion of Slavic Muslims, which also ran against his own motto of the Serbian nation being above the religious divide.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Zmaj was almost unanimously rejected by the first Serbian modernists who generally turned away from what were considered national and stale literary forms. They were looking for international models, eternal themes and global issues as well as classical or foreign forms. In the most authoritative anthology of Serbian poetry which appeared in Zagreb in 1911, and which was, according to its author Bogdan Popović, based on purely aesthetic criteria, Zmaj did not fare well. The only exception to this initial rejection after Zmaj’s death was literary critic Jovan Skerlić, who praised Zmaj’s poetic activism and described him as the most capable representative of the literature which was needed by the Serbian people to satisfy their thirst in this idealistic epoch. Skerlić also regretted that Zmaj “squandered his poetic talent in many little coins that he spent on people’s daily needs.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, it was Skerlić who set the tone for the later acceptance of Zmaj in the Serbian cultural and literary canon in the interwar period. The new Yugoslav state legitimized its existence through the noble legacy of writers and other proponents of South Slav unification. Zmaj was clearly singled out for his prophetic vision. Critics, school curricula and pub-

53 For the synthesis of conflicting views on Kostić’s book, see Vuković (1984) and Udo-
vički (1983).

54 Quoted in Stajić (1933), p. 150.

lishing houses were put to use to construct the Serbian national literature and provide reasons for a nation to associate politically. The literature was endowed with the special mission of forging unity and acting as a substitute for religion, not because the Yugoslav public was highly secularized, but because of its multi-confessionalism and the legacy of bitter religious hatred. On the occasions of the 25th anniversary of Zmaj's death in 1929, and the centenary of his birth in 1933, the Ministry of Education ordered all schools to hold lectures on Zmaj. At the same time special ceremonies were held in Belgrade and Novi Sad and literary and other journals dedicated special issues to his memory. Commemorations were accompanied by publication of an edition of Zmaj's collected works. It was clearly the context rather than the literary value of Zmaj's poetry that was celebrated. The key role was played by literary professionals who offered a new Yugoslav and celebratory reading of Zmaj. So for example, Ivo Andrić, the only Yugoslav Nobel Prize winner in literature, rejected the discussion of the artistic value of Zmaj's poetry. Instead he praised it as "instrumental for any child who from his verses discovered the magic of the rhyme, learned the basic human values, developed first emotions and thoughts and prepared generations after him for adulthood and creation."⁵⁵ The great novelist Crnjanski also dismissed the characterization of Zmaj as an outdated poet, insisting on the educational, national and social value of his poetry which immortalized the glory and the pain of Serbian and Yugoslav liberation, stressing:

Our people had a poet who could sing what the whole people felt—one for all. He was political but whatever he touched he made poetic.⁵⁶

Although his *oeuvre* might not be perfect, insisted Crnjanski, Zmaj was perfect in the purity of his experience and representation of the period in which he created. Respected literary scholar, Anica Savić Rebac, deemed Zmaj's politics and ethics indivisible, his freedom as both national and individual, his equality as both political and social.⁵⁷ The fact that someone who was a Republican, anti-clericalist and virtually a socialist (in Savić Rebac's understanding) became the most beloved poet of Serbian society of the second half of the 19th century was the highest compliment this society could give. Admitting that Zmaj was courting his audience with nationalist ideas and tone as well as

55 Andrić (1997), pp. 167–169.

56 Crnjanski (1966), p. 42.

57 Savić Rebac (1988), pp. 403–406.

his attachment to folklore and traditional singing, Savić Rebac stressed his libertarian vision and the sense of latent revolt present in his poems. Zmaj's biographer Radivoje Vrhovac dismissed earlier sharp criticism which focused on the shortcomings of Zmaj's poetic language, interpreting it as a natural phase in the literature just being formed and oriented towards practical and non-aesthetic goals on its way to higher and purer forms of art.⁵⁸ Another of Zmaj's biographers, Stajić, celebrated the renaissance of Zmaj's cult, attributing it to "the people who knew to appreciate not only the poetry which is instinctive, subconscious, fantastic, but the poetry that described cultural, national and social life, fed on that life and kept it like salt that would not allow it to become insipid."⁵⁹ The people needed Zmaj's poetry like daily bread, claimed Stajić, insisting that the nation without such literature is broken and insecure. If Zmaj was a people's poet before, after the Great War and the unification of South Slavs he was institutionalized as their apostle, missionary and prophet. Thanks to his efforts, many a political and personal conflict was resolved. A new illusionary picture of the past was created which obliterated the futility of Serbian political life under the Habsburg Monarchy, the weak results of Serbian cultural nationalism, and the ever deteriorating demographic and economic situation of Serbs in Hungary. Stajić praised Zmaj as a fighter and celebrated him together with Miletić (the greatest hero of Yugoslavia), naming them the Yugoslav Achilles and Homer respectively.⁶⁰

After the Second World War, Zmaj's position in the literary canon remained basically unquestioned but new explanations were added to account for the changed political circumstances in socialist Yugoslavia. During the war, the Partisan resistance movement took up Zmaj's verses as a wake-up call once more. Their pugnacious outcry had lost no force, according to one contemporary, as freedom again became the basic human longing. The official instruction of Yugoslav partisans on how to perform Zmaj's patriotic poetry during the war offered the explanation:

The struggle of our people against Turkish rule had many similarities with our contemporary struggle against fascist invader; except for the fact that then the fighters-avengers were called hajduks and not partisans. Common

58 Vrhovac (1933), p. 13.

59 Stajić (1930), p. 103.

60 *Idem.*, p. 110; Milutinović (1933) compared Zmaj's role to that of Hugo in the French and Carducci in Italian literature.

to both of them was that they were imprisoned, tortured and murdered while their families were persecuted.⁶¹

Literary critic, Živan Milisavac, responsible for editing Zmaj's work and maintaining his aura in socialist Yugoslavia, maintained that his greatness emanated from the greatness of the idealist epoch which produced him and his *oeuvre* and that he stood to compensate for the unfulfilled ideals of his time.⁶² In 1955, the first literary journal for children was founded under Zmaj's name. Two more editions of Zmaj's collected works appeared in 1966–1968 and in 1975. Previous criticism was moderated as diametrically opposed opinions were reconciled by recognizing the truth in both of them. Zmaj's poetry was described as a bridge between folk epic and modern individualist artistic and poetic expression. Contemporary poet Ljubomir Simović condemned the spirit of previous epochs for not being able to fully appreciate Zmaj's verses in which he found elements of all later trends in poetry; from modernism to Dadaism and surrealism, absurd humor, and a Kafkaesque apocalyptic vision of the world.⁶³ In Zmaj's poems on death and madness, nothingness and apathy, Simović saw the Serbian predecessor of Baudelaire, and in his political and satirical verses Simović saw the Serbian Brecht of the 19th century. The teleological view of Serbian history remained unquestioned and Zmaj's role crucial in justifying it. Simović singled out a few of the poems as still relevant and valuable—such as those condemning traitors or those warning Serbs not to fall victim to foreign influences or to assimilation because the Serbian people still faced the same problems as in Zmaj's times. Moreover, there are nowadays numerous attempts to rediscover and remake Zmaj as a nationalist and Orthodox poet, divorce his poems from their context and use them to foster feelings of national and religious belonging among children.⁶⁴

At the same time there are a few voices challenging the philological principles and folkloric purism that determined for so long the interpretation and appreciation of Zmaj's poetry.⁶⁵ They target Zmaj's use of epic poetry formulae, which were formulated in completely different social settings, or more generally the way Romanticists employed the spoken language. They view

61 Radišić (1983), p. 457.

62 Milisavac (1967).

63 Simović (2001).

64 Savić (1996); Hadži Kangrga (1983).

65 Koljević (1983); Bogert (1996); and Milinčević (1984).

Zmaj critically for his contribution to the canonization of the forms of folk poetry, which reduced the national poetic legacy and led to the complete disappearance of the older poetic tradition. As Miroslav Jovanović recently stressed in his study on Karadžić's legacy, the reduction and simplification of Serbian culture and literature to popular oral (patriarchal) culture fortified political myths that celebrated rural and *volkisch* culture while suppressing urban traditions and culture. It also hindered the formation of a continuous and encompassing cultural legacy, and fostered the rhetoric of political populism and even anti-intellectualism.⁶⁶ Recent nationalist revisionism in Serbian historiography abandoned interwar celebrations of Zmaj's endeavors at Serbo-Croatian unity and offered a different point of view. Vasilije Krestić discredited Zmaj as an idealist, not able to see that the whole oppositional struggle of Serbs in Hungary was futile, reaffirming the pro-Hungarian stance of the Serbian elites and the Orthodox Church hierarchy in Croatia. Krestić also claimed that any reconciling stance towards Croats proved not only damaging, but even detrimental.⁶⁷

Zmaj, the great People's Poet, could never have envisaged that his poetry would see so many uses and conflicting interpretations. His poems were re-contextualised after his death as new extra-literary contexts and political discourses privileged some over other ideas found in Zmaj's verses. In order to demonstrate the constructivist, manipulative and historically dependent and contingent appropriation of literature as part of national identity politics, this chapter has placed them side by side with the "original" text: namely the evidence from Zmaj's life, thoughts and literary work. The biographical sketch showed both Zmaj's great and liberating thoughts and his grave misjudgments. More relevant for subsequent reinterpretation, it corroborated the multitude of ambiguities and paradoxes in Zmaj's ideas and poetry, which allowed room for the numerous uses and abuses. The story of how this dynamic interplay unfolded in the case of a popular Serbian poet with a national aura is, however, only one part of the historical process through which national identity is articulated and negotiated in time and space.

66 Jovanović (2002).

67 Krestić (1987), p. 53.

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FAIK KONITZA, THE MODERNIZER OF THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE AND NATION*

ARTAN PUTO

Faik bej Konitza was an important figure of the Albanian National Movement. During the communist regime in Albania he was labelled a “reactionary,” and therefore no studies could be undertaken on him. His main sin was to have served as minister in Washington, for King Zog I (1928–1939). With the end of isolationism and fall of the communist regime in 1990, the road for thousands of Albanians to leave the country and for Konitza to come back home, once and for all, was opened. His remnants were brought to Albania in 1995. His simple tomb in the park of the capital Tirana has thus fulfilled his last wish, to be interred in his “fatherland’s soil.”

I present him here as the subject of a case study for three main reasons. Firstly, he was one of the main figures of the second phase of the Albanian National Movement (1878–1912). This allows for some comparative approaches in relation to the “fathers,” or the first generation of Albanian nationalist intellectuals, one of the most important among them being Shemseddin Sami Frashëri (1850–1904). Secondly, considering the discursive articulation and political instrumentalization of the concepts of folk, people, nation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it should be noted that Konitza, more than anyone else among Albanian nationalist intellectuals of his time, stressed the importance of an Albanian literary language in forging an Albanian nation. Through his work it can be seen how the local context was important in informing his intellectual argument about the supremacy, in the European context of the late 19th century, of “natural” or national languages over “artificial ones.” It also allows a better view into

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“intellectual cosmopolitanism,”¹ or the appropriation and domestication of European ideas of the “people’s character” and “language as the personification of people’s spirit,” by local nationalist intellectuals. The Albanian nation of Konitza was an idea that was constructed *vis-à-vis* other competing identities, such as religious and regional ones. Thirdly, his figure has remained in the shadows for a very long time. Therefore my article will include a short critique of Albanian historiography in “discovering” him and his works.

I will analyze Konitza’s articulation of the Albanian nation through his articles published in his magazine *Albania* (1897–1909), that ended its publication few years prior to the Albanian independence in 1912. In order to have as complete a picture as possible, I will also consider an essay on artificial languages written in French in 1904. My research will seek to reconstruct Konitza’s concept of the Albanian nation along the following subtopics: a) Albanian nation and Albanian language, dialects and regions; b) Albanian nation and religion; c) Albanian ancient origins. I will concisely compare Konitza’s articulation of an Albanian “nation” with some points on the nationalist discourse of Shemseddin Sami Frashëri (1850–1904). This comparison will help grasp the evolution of the discourse on the Albanian language as the focal point of the intellectual tradition of the Albanian National Movement in constructing an Albanian nation: from a legitimating hallmark, used mostly to indicate the existence of the Albanian nationality in the first phase of the National Movement, to a functionalist perception that saw the Albanian literary language as a means of bringing inner coherence to the would-be Albanian nation.

WHO WAS FAIK KONITZA?

Faik Konitza was born on March 15, 1876, in Konitza—at that time a small town in a Balkan province of the Ottoman Empire, which became part of Greece after the Balkan Wars. His parents were one of the high-ranking Muslim families holding important positions in the Ottoman administration.² Konitza received a comprehensive and scrupulous education. He studied in

¹ I borrow this term from Anne-Marie Thiesse, who uses it when she explains the role played by various “Western” European “collectors” or creators of folklore during the 18th and 19th centuries as part of a patriotic project, and model to be followed later on by “eastern” colleagues, to endow respective people with a “spirit, character” indicating their uniqueness through unity of language and culture in general. Thiesse (1999), p. 66.

² Jorgaqi, (2001), p. 55.

Istanbul, later France and the US, mastering important Eastern and Western languages. His education was completed at Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts), when in 1912 he received his Master of Arts Degree in Literature.³

In 1897, when he was only 21 years old, Konitza started a monthly review called *Albania* in Brussels, published partly in Albanian and partly in French. The review lasted until 1909 and has been considered one of the most important factors concerned in the promotion of the Albanian language and culture. After five years in Belgium, in 1902, Konitza moved to London, where he continued the publication of his review. In the autumn of 1909, he arrived in Boston, Massachusetts (US) and took over the editorship of the Albanian weekly *Dielli* [The Sun], the newspaper of the Albanian emigrants there. In 1912, together with Bishop Fan S. Noli and other leaders, he founded the longest-lasting Albanian patriotic organization, the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, *Vatra* [The Hearth], which still exists nowadays. *Vatra* played an important role in defending the independence and the territorial integrity of the newly-created Albanian state.

After the proclamation of Albania's independence on November 28, 1912, Konitza left for Europe to plead the cause of Albania in various capitals of Western Europe, including London, where the Conference of Ambassadors endorsed the independent status of Albania in July 1913. During the First World War, he lived in Vienna and then in Rome. From 1926–1939, he was minister for King Zog I (1928–1939) in Washington, where he died in 1942.

THE NATION OF FAIK KONITZA

ALBANIAN NATION AND ALBANIAN LANGUAGE, DIALECTS AND REGIONS

Konitza's central preoccupation was related to the problems of the Albanian alphabet and written language, or the "literary language" as he called it. In what follows, I shall examine the meaning Konitza lent to the national language as a national asset. A good chance to do so is offered by his "*Essai sur les langues naturelles et les langues artificielles*," which appeared in the French review *Pan*, in 1909. It was written in 1904. The essay was a reaction against

3 Jorgaqi, (2001), p. 205; *ibid.*, p. 61.

the spread of the so-called universal languages, such as Esperanto, “Blue Language” and “Volapuk,” which Konitza considered as *artificial* languages, in contrast to *natural*, or national languages.

Konitza presents his essay as a treatise on language philosophy, aiming to explain the inner rules governing natural languages. Most of the sources and references—provided in the footnotes—used by Konitza for his treatise dealt with language philosophy or linguistics. From philosophy, Konitza applied the evolutionist school. Here he cited Herbert Spencer, Alfred Russell Wallace, John Locke, etc. From linguistics, he referred mostly to the French linguists Arsen Darmesteter, Remy de Gourmont (whose *La vie des mots* and *La culture des idées* were among the most quoted) and Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), whose dictionary he held in high esteem.⁴

Here I shall focus primarily on the relationship Konitza drew between natural languages and “race,” in the sense of both “people” and “nation.” He summarily presented his starting point by arguing that: “The artificial is in fashion today. Everything that is the natural outcome of a long chain of historic conjectures is now at risk of being replaced by manufactured products. Everything is manufactured, even the universal languages.”⁵

Konitza contemptuously dismissed artificial languages with the use of one of his strongest arguments: prior to natural languages, artificial languages were useless, as the former were the translation of the “national genius” of a given people into sounds. The way different people write in their languages can tell a great deal about their “racial manners,” “intellectual leanings, traditions and moral values.”

What was Konitza’s idea of “race”? Referring to the “French race,” he wrote that from an “anthropological point of view,” that is, as a physical type, it did not constitute a homogenous whole. The “French race” might have looked like a “Latin one,” but in reality was a fusion of different “physical types” dominated by the “northern blonde type” and “Neanderthal man.” The “racial uniformity” of the native speakers of a specific, in this case the French, derived from language and psychology.⁶ For Konitza, French racial uniformity was evident in the “people’s psychology.”⁷ He argued that any particular nation had its own model of thinking and behavior, which came out through the

4 Starova, (2001), p. 17.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 109.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 141.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 141.

language it used. Referring to the French language and the difficulties a foreigner might encounter to fully learn it, Konitza wrote:

I think that for a foreigner it is impossible to think in the same way as the French do. There are ways of sensing, of analyzing, of sorting, which French people inherit and that even the ablest foreigner couldn't but spoil them. Besides that, the foreigner should learn one by one the same words that French people carry with by birth.⁸

He defined the French language as *analytic, clear and graceful*, English as *sharp and dry*, whilst Italian had *wearisome features and loose construction*. According to him, these structural linguistic diversities were influenced by their respective "racial typologies." Konitza's position on this issue should be understood in the terms of the momentum which ethnic nationalism had gained in Europe in the second half of the 19th century, through the transformation of the concept of race and Darwinian evolutionism, when "race" and "language" were seen as two concepts closely linked to each other.⁹

Konitza further maintained that the natural language used by a people was an indicator of the level of their civilization. His thesis was backed by the following observation: the more the people or "the race is civilized, the fewer exclamation marks its natural language possesses." He thus thought that exclamation marks were incompatible with the austere and introvert character and the higher scale of civilization of Northern European writers.¹⁰ The national language was similarly shaped according to "the professional skills of the people," exemplified by the mathematically exact Semitic languages, which suited the national genius of Arabs for calculations and combinations.¹¹ In Konitza's view, natural languages subscribed to the laws of evolution: unlike the artificial languages which were condemned to fossilization, they change as nations change and this happens in conformity with the "spirit of the race."¹²

8 *Ibid.*, p. 133. To bear proof of his assertion, namely that human beings are born with certain knowledge of respective mother tongue, Konitza takes the example of the nightingale born in a cage, which sings in the same way as its free cohorts in the wood.

9 Starova (2001), p. 117. Hobsbawm (2002), pp. 108-109. See also Suny and Kennedy (2001), p. 28, Anderson (2003), pp. 67-83; Breuilly (1994), pp. 54-69.

10 Starova, p. 116.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Konitza's main concern was just the fear that artificial languages were part of a strategy aimed at completely erasing natural diversity as embodied in the nationalities and their natural languages.¹³ It is also very likely that he saw them as a threat to his intellectual mission as constructor of the "Albanian literary language."

Turning to his writings in *Albania*, in the start of the first issue (1897), it was written that the magazine would be devoted to "literature, linguistic, history and sociology."¹⁴ Konitza's first article there, "The enemies of Albania," sought to explain the Albanians' present degraded situation by the fact that "there are fewer literate Albanians than true words in the priest's mouth," that "Albania's enemies are the Albanians themselves, as they have shed their blood for the others, thus selling themselves," that "Albanians do not love freedom," "some do not speak Albanian and for this reason believe they are not Albanians."¹⁵ Konitza therefore conceived his review as a medium through which all Albanians could come together and talk "like civilized people who fight with their words for their ideals." These ideals were "the love for truth and for Albania."¹⁶ He saw Albanians as a people with only a biological existence, or "the life of body" (physical living) as he put it. The future should be different: the national language was invested with the role of reviving a community, which in the eyes of Konitza had lost the consciousness of being one whole.

Konitza's stance on this issue derived from a broader political design. Under the conditions of growing Balkan nationalism and an increasingly weakening Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century, he supported the idea of a "gradual cultural preparation of the Albanian people" through a stage of administrative autonomy for Albanian lands within the Ottoman Empire. This would provide a kind of temporary shelter for Albanians until their full political independence. In the meantime, all efforts would be needed to save their nationality, or else, "in a quarter of a century we will pass from the Sultan's hands to the Slavs', Greeks' and Italians' hands, like miserable slaves."¹⁷ The Albanians should be prepared, as an already distinct and compact "national

13 Here Konitza refers to Gustav Flaubert's book *The sentimental education*, where the author puts in the mouth of one of his eccentric personages the idea of a universal language for the whole of humanity: Jorgaqi (2001), p. 62.

14 *Albania*, no. 1 (1897).

15 *Albania*, no. 1 (1897), pp. 1–2.

16 *Albania*, no. 2 (1897), p. 32.

17 Jorgaqi (2001), p. 8.

community,” to face the future crumbling of the Ottoman Empire.”¹⁸ And this national community would be forged through cultural development, leaving aside the armed rebellions. At that time this stance was supported by Austro-Hungary, which financed his journal, in view of the preservation of the *status quo* in the Balkans. Assistance from Austro-Hungary was considered by Konitza to be of paramount importance to help achieve this goal and protect the Albanian-inhabited lands from being partitioned by the newly-founded Balkan states. He believed in Austro-Hungary’s interest in helping the Albanian nationalist movement as a barrier to Slav advancement in the Balkans.

Central to the attainment of cultural development of Albanians was the forging of a literary language. That for Konitza had two main dimensions—the creation of a common alphabet and a standardized Albanian literary language. The condition of both was similar to the one described by Maria Todorova about early 19th-century Bulgaria: defined by the existence of multigraphia and multilingualism.¹⁹ Until 1908, the time of the Young Turk Revolution, nationally-minded Albanian intellectuals used three alphabets for printing their literary productions.²⁰ What Konitza wanted to achieve was to promote the usage of his own alphabet, which was close to that of “Bashkimi” literary society, and make it the basis for the unification of the others.²¹ It was intended to fuse the two major written dialects, the northern Geg and the southern Tosk.²² All this would go hand in hand with the major goal—the creation of an Albanian literary language.

How did Konitza perceive the Albanian language at that time, and how did he justify the approach he took? On many occasions, Konitza expressed the idea that the Albanian language was an ancient, but uncultivated language—archaic and lacking enough words to express ideas.²³ He thought that Albanian was a rather “folklore and wedding language,” “poor in philosophical and general terms, which made it difficult to express oneself with the appropriate clarity on major topics.”²⁴

18 *Albania*, no. 2, (1897), p. 1.

19 Todorova (1990), vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 439–450.

20 *Historia e Shqipërisë* [History of Albania], (2002), p. 211; pp. 348–352, 359. For a more detailed account of this issue, see also Skendi (1967), pp. 111–316; also Skendi (1980), pp. 211–233.

21 Skendi (1980), p. 220.

22 Jorgaqi (2001), vol. 5, pp. 297–300.

23 *Albania*, no. 6, (1906), p. 119.

24 *Albania*, no. 11, (1898), p. 201; Konitza, (2001), vol. 4, p. 5.

For Konitza, the problem of creating the Albanian literary language pertained more to the existing political and national order than to philology. The problem was political, as its solution did not come from the gradual evolution of the language itself, but came through the intervention of Albanian nationalists based on the urgent need to bind Albanians together around a literary language. It was also a question of “national renaissance,” “civilization and progress of the people.”²⁵

Konitza saw the written dialects as “dividing factors” amongst the Albanian people. In “*Les dialectes albanais et la nécessité de leur fusion*,” Konitza presented his thesis to fuse the two main dialects, the northern Geg and the southern Tosk into one literary language.²⁶ He argued that their difference, as everyday spoken languages, was based on phonetic nuances, but which became more accentuated in the written forms. Therefore, he thought that a common literary language taught at schools could diminish this distinction and bring unity:

The question here is not to erase Tosk or Geg, nor to convince Albanians to improve their everyday spoken language, Tosk or Geg, in view of the unification of the dialects. Such a thing would be impossible and not convenient either. For changing the language of people would amount to change its character and spoil its personality. The Tosk dialect, which is vivid, light and in an ever going evolution, reflects very well the Tosk character, with its constrained austerity, humorous, bent on intrigues and skilful. On the contrary, the Geg dialect, massive one, immobile, without ambiguous expressions, shows very well the Geg character which is serious, sincere, more often without bad intentions and resilient to novelties. The question is to create beyond the parallel existence of the two dialects, a written literary language that is the same for all Albania.²⁷

The solution for Konitza seemed to be the preservation of both dialects, not just for the sake of preserving linguistic richness, but to employ them for different uses. The dialect of the more urban and pragmatic people of the south, was more suitable for prose. While the dialect of the epic, unruly and stubborn people of the north, was deemed by Konitza to be more convenient for poetry. By these means Konitza wanted to push literate Albanians towards

25 *Albania*, no. 6, (1906), pp. 120–121.

26 *Albania*, no. 10, (1898), pp. 173–174.

27 *Albania*, no. 10, (1898), p. 173.

a better knowledge of each dialect thereby increasing the communication between people of different regions. The coexistence of the two written dialects was conceived as a transitory period toward the creation of a common written language. Some years later, Konitza wrote another article with the title "Towards the foundation of a literary language," where he stated that:

So far, the Albanians didn't know the common life, but only that of the village or town; therefore everybody was happy with the dialect of the area where he lived. Today Albanians entered a new wider life, the national life. This huge widening in their life obliges us to widen also our language. This new body, the Nation, needs a new organ.²⁸

Faik Konitza thought of the "national life" as a new, more qualitative and more inclusive life experience compared to the regional one. It also had a fundamental prerequisite, which was the national language, or Albanian literary language.

In our case, the dialects and their respective regional allegiances are treated as composite elements of an overarching Albanian national identity. When Konitza wrote on Albanian literary language, as one of the main features of the national identity, he conceived the latter as an overarching one. The dichotomy between dialect and national literary language in Konitza's texts accounts for that inherent conflict within nationalist ideologies between authenticity and modernization.²⁹ The dialect is held to be an authentic and more direct set of values for the inhabitants. Through the agency of press, text books, linguistic standardizing intervention, the dialects should be gradually transformed to fit the modernized version of the literary language. This new kind of language entailed the acquisition of a new self-identification, the national one, which was still missing among Albanians. In an article of 1898, with the title "Albanian Nation," through an invented dialogue between an Albanian and a foreigner, Konitza ridiculed the way his compatriots perceived their identity:

Foreigner – What are you?

Albanian – I am Moslem (or Christian, depending on the case).

F – I am not asking what is your religion, but please be kind enough and tell me what are you?

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

²⁹ Peckham (2004), pp. 41–60.

A – You do not understand; I just told you I am Moslem.

F – I am afraid you understand nothing; I am asking what nation are you from. Do you know what nation is about?

A – I don't get it so well.

F – Nation is a gathering of people, who have one origin, one language and one way of living. Now, tell me what are you?

A – I am a Turk.

F – Ok, do you know Turkish?

A – I don't know, may be that little that I learnt at school.

F – And your customs are the same as Anatolians?

A – Not at all ...

F – So, you are not a Turk then, may be you are Greek or Latin. Do you know those languages?

A – My language is neither Greek, nor Latin, the language taught by my mother, the language I have heard at home is Albanian.

F – Albanian is an old and nice language. So, you are Albanian.

A – I am Albanian, but also Turk.

F – One can not have both things at once, if you are Albanian you are nothing else. Maybe you are Moslem Albanian, but you are not a Turk.

A – I tell you I am a Turk.

F – Religion is religion, nation is nation. As you speak Albanian and you live in Albania, you are not a Turk, nor a Greek, nothing else but an Albanian.”³⁰

Language thus gained predominance over religious divisions. National versus religious identity was another way to construct the “Albanian nation.”

ALBANIAN NATION AND RELIGION

In his articles, Konitza used two levels to construct the Albanian nation as an antinomy to religion: the past Golden Age and the depressing present. He presented the nation as older than religion, as a higher and nobler set of values. In Konitza's view, but also in articles written by other authors in *Albania*, religious allegiances were perceived as a more recent phenomenon, which had superseded the national ones. This is how Konitza explained the dynamics between nation and religion:

30 *Albania*, no. 10, (1898), p. 181.

Nation means all people who live in the same land, speak the same language and have the same origin. We Albanians, we live in the same land, speak Albanian and have the same origin, and therefore we are one nation, we are the Albanian nation. Some nations are Moslem, some are Christian, or some are both mixed Moslem and Christian. But all nations had no religion two thousand years before. Today, the Albanian nation is Moslem, Catholic, Orthodox and Bektashi, mixed altogether. But, like the other nations, the Albanian nation has believed in the moon, in the sun, the stars, the trees and the rocks ... with time, the Albanian nation changed its religion and became all Christian, till the arrival of the Ottomans. The Ottomans came to Albania in the 15th century, and after 30 years of fighting, the Albanian nation was forced to become Moslem; some 50 years later some Albanians returned to the old Christian religion, while the rest remained Moslem, either because they found it better or because it served them more. Albanians have always been brave and strong, but after being divided by religions, they have lost their strength.³¹

In this text religion has an ambiguous dimension in relation to the national one. It comes later and changes over time, while the Albanian nation remains one and the same through the centuries. This a-historic and essentialist perception of Albanian nation serve above all to highlight the past golden age in contrast to the gloomy present, where religion had exerted its long-term noxious effects on the nation causing the loss of its former strength.

Religion was, for that reason, a matter of concern for Konitza and other authors writing in his review. The articles related to this topic oscillated between two poles: the Albanian religious indifference and tolerance, and an Albanian nationality torn apart by different religious affiliations. The attention of *Albania* leaned more towards the second tendency. This is also explained by the fact that Konitza conceived of religious tolerance as characteristic of a bygone time. Now, his action aimed to revive that "national virtue" deemed to have been temporarily lost. In an article written on the state of "Albanian nationality" in 1898, he quoted the English traveller J. C. Hobhouse, who in the early 19th century made a trip to Albanian inhabited lands and distinguished Albanians among all the other people of the Ottoman Empire as the only ones who identified themselves according to their nationality and not their religion.³²

³¹ *Albania*, no. 9, (1898), p. 146.

³² *Albania*, (1898), p. 17. The book cited by Konitza is *A journey through Albania through the years 1809-1810*, by J. C. Hobhouse, London, 1811.

But, when it came to the present time, the end of the 19th century, Konitza was worried that Christian Albanians declared themselves to be Greeks. He blamed this “alienation” on the Hellenizing policies of the Greek state.

However, when refuting foreign allegations on Albanian religious fanaticism the picture he presented was not as problematic as that drawn up for “internal consumption,” when addressing the Albanian readers. His main counter-argument to foreign patterns of perceiving Albanians as “religiously divided” was that the Albanians were the least religious people in the Balkans, except for some Albanian border populations that were “infected” by the religious fanaticism of their neighbors.³³ The stance became more critical when he spoke to his co-nationals: then he was the educator of the nation who pointed out the “weaknesses” of his community that needed to be redressed.

It should be stressed that the “religious indifference” of Albanians remains one of the most resilient ideological constructs that still inform Albanian studies. It is based upon the belief of the survival of certain Albanian “national qualities,” which had made possible the relegation of religion to a secondary position. This basically essentialist, primordialist and holist view of the Albanian nation has much in common with the ideological constructs in Konitza’s discourse about Albanian pragmatism, religious tolerance, or religious indifference.³⁴

From a functionalist point of view, Albanian pragmatism, religious tolerance, put forth by Konitza and other Albanian intellectuals, were “invented traditions,” whose aim was “to establish or symbolize social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities.”³⁵ On the one hand, they were trying, via these traditions, to give a message, or to create the image of a united nation, on the other, they were doing so as Albanian nationalist intellectuals, like Konitza, were aware of strong religious loyalties among the people.

How did Konitza see the overcoming of religious divisions and rendering them less harmful to national identity?

The solutions presented by Konitza are closely linked to how he formulated his future “ideal Albania.” In his view, Albania should be “passionate national-

33 “What the foreigners think about Albanians,” *Albania*, no. 7, (1903), pp. 101–102.

34 *History of Albanian People*, (2002), pp. 27–28; also Skendi (1967), pp. 7–21. See also the study of Clayer in *Mésogeios*, no. 2, (1998), pp. 17–39. Clayer rightly points out that one can speak of “religious superficiality among Albanians” only for certain groups and for certain periods of time, without imposing a general pattern over Albanians as a whole homogenous community.

35 Hobsbawm, *Invented traditions*, p. 9.

ist and aware of its leanings towards the occidental world.”³⁶ He saw the solution in “Albanizing” the religion. The stress is put here on the fact that religions in Albanian-inhabited lands were professed and controlled by foreign clergy, who did not use the vernacular in their practices. The idea behind these texts was that the language used for religious services should be Albanian. Apart from the importance given to language as a transmitter of national feelings, Konitza’s texts also revealed the concern of their author to handle with care this issue and not to offend the religious attachments of Albanians.³⁷

In other cases, Konitza opted for more militant solutions indicating a clear and definitive rupture with the “backward Orient.”³⁸ According to him, the links with the more backward Orient were kept alive by Albanian Muslims. Consequently, Albanian Muslims were required to undergo major changes in order to join the “civilized Albanian nation” through conversion. But the key element, in Konitza’s opinion, which could also help the conversion of Muslims into Christians, was the “Albanization” of Orthodox Albanians. This meant to isolate Albanian Orthodox community from Greek influence.³⁹ When this community gained religious independence then it would become, as Konitza imagined it, a pole of attraction for the Albanian Muslims, who could join them and return to their ancestors’ faith. To make the question of religion appear more urgent he foresaw that, after the retreat of Ottoman domination from its European territories, Albanian Muslims would find themselves in a precarious predicament. The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire would bring along with it the partition of Albania between the Christian states of the Balkans. Consequently, Albanian Muslims would be expelled towards Turkey, but they would not be accepted by the Ottoman authorities.⁴⁰

When Konitza dealt with a religious problem, he expressed himself at times in a form of wishful thinking, a desire for an idealized situation, and sometimes he seemed to believe that Albanians really possessed certain intrinsic qualities. Konitza held that the Islamization process in Albanian-inhabited lands was uneven, though forcefully carried out, and resulted in a non-

36 *Albania*, no. 5, (1907), p. 121.

37 *Albania*, no. 2, (1897), p. 21; *Albania*, no. 8, (1897), p. 121.

38 For the orientalist discourse in the texts of some of the most important Albanian national leaders during the National Movement period, see Sulstarova (2003).

39 *Albania*, no. 7, (1906), pp. 144–146.

40 *Albania*, vol. XII, (1909), pp. 22–23. In this article Faik Konitza refers to the fate of Muslims in Serbia, namely Vranja and Leskovac. He says that when Serbia took possession of these lands it expelled the Muslim populations.

homogenous community. As a result, for Konitza, the northern Gëgs were more fanaticized than the southern Tosks, who were only superficial Muslims. On the other hand, women could also lend a hand in this undertaking:

Since old times, Albanian woman felt through an unmistakable instinct that Islam—with its polygamy, with its easy divorce and reducing a legal woman into a servant—was dangerous for women's rights and for the sanctity of the family.⁴¹

However variegated the discourses Konitza held on the religious problem were, in general, Albanian nationalist intellectuals considered it of primary importance. For Konitza, a religious union would immediately bring about “the union of the nation.”⁴² The religious division among Albanians was a frustrating issue for the Albanian intellectuals of that time, as despite their patriotic rhetoric on Albanians’ “religious indifference,” they considered it a real factor on the ground, albeit a harmful one, for the future project of a culturally homogenous Albania. If they spoke on religious tolerance, they didn’t describe the picture on the ground. They were formulating a strategy for constructing a national community of Albanians.⁴³ This community would be uniform in all its aspects and loyal to the nation and not to religion.⁴⁴ This role was ascribed to the common Albanian literary language, which was of the same ancient origin, but not religion, as it was practiced in foreign languages.

As was seen above, religion was not discarded from the set of tools that could be used in molding an Albanian nation. But, while the national loyalties had to be constructed, yet remaining a virtual reality, religious values were deeply entrenched in the customs of the people. Therefore, since they could not be avoided, religious values were to be transformed. The national project of Konitza foresaw the “Albanization” of religion, as a means to compensate

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴³ This is clearly stated in the article written by Fan. S. Noli in *Albania* with the title “The Albanian Orthodox Church.” See *Albania*, no. 5, (1907), pp. 35–37. In 1908, the author would become the head of the Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Boston. Noli underlines the great importance the religious factor plays in the unification of the people. Noli dismisses the option of conversion among Albanians and suggests instead that the religious leadership should be a national one. It must carry out religious practices in Albanian. His main concern here was with Muslim and Orthodox Albanians, as Catholics enjoyed religious institutions where Albanian language was taught. Skëndi, (1980), p. 218.

⁴⁴ Clayer, (1998).

for the existence of three religious communities among the Albanians. If he speaks about "Albanization" of religion through creating local religious centers and introducing Albanian language in their practices in the cases of Muslims and Orthodox Albanians, he seems to exclude the Albanian Catholics from this question. From his national point of view, Konitza already considered the Albanian Catholic community in a positive way: firstly, because this community was already in possession of Albanian schools; and secondly, because it was under the Austro-Hungarian protectorate, that the Albanian vernacular was promoted as far as possible to counterpoise Slav advancement in the northern areas inhabited by Albanians.⁴⁵

In this matter his major concern, as for other nationalist intellectuals previously, was to present Muslim Albanians as different from the Turks, more tolerant and autochthon. This was not only on account of the fact that a major part of Albanian population was Muslim, but also in order to secure them a place in the Balkans, in the aftermath of the crumbling, then withdrawal of the Empire from its European territories.⁴⁶

ANCIENT ALBANIAN ORIGINS

In the article "The enemies of Albania," the most important factor uniting Albanians came to be the same roots, or a common origin. Konitza said that there were Albanians who did not speak Albanian language, but nevertheless it was the origin which bound them together:

Those between us who do not speak Albanian easily say they are not Albanian. What does the language have to do with this matter? Swiss people, for example, speak either French, or German, but they are one nation. Why? Because they have one origin and nation is a matter of origin and not language.⁴⁷

Throughout the pages of *Albania*, Konitza explored the old origins of the Albanians in the territories where they lived. Generally, the part of the review dealing with history had two kinds of writings: 1) popular history; 2) unpublished documents or studies on Albanian history, archaeology, folklore and

45 Skëndi, (1980), p. 218.

46 Clayer, (2007).

47 *Albania*, no. 1, (1897), p. 2.

ethnography.⁴⁸ Konitza was more attracted to the history of antiquity, the history of Albanian national hero Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbej (1403–1468), and the Albanian diaspora.

I will mention here only what Konitza published in his review about the ancient origin of Albanians. This topic has quite often been examined in Albanian studies, but it was not put in the appropriate context.⁴⁹ As we will see, the old origin of Albanians was greatly influenced by the findings of Western scholars and also the political agenda of the Albanian nationalist intellectuals of that time.

From the first issues of his review, Konitza began to publish pieces of documents on the Pellazgs, who were held to be the most ancient populations living in the Balkan area. They are mainly pieces taken from Homer and Herodotus, where the name of Pellazgs is mentioned. They are mentioned in the sense of being older than the Greeks and their language being different from Greek. From the title of the column, “Written proofs from Antiquity on the origin of the Albanian nation,” it becomes clear that Konitza was establishing a direct connection between the Pellazgs and the Albanians.⁵⁰ He said that from these pieces the reader would draw the conclusion that: 1) the ancient writers believed that the Pellazgs lived in the same territories where Albanians live today; and 2) the names of the deities and all the beautiful verses of the Greeks were taken from the Pellazgs.⁵¹ A more direct statement on the continuity between Pellazgs and Albanians comes from the poetries of Naim Frashëri (1850–1900)—Sami’s elder brother and Albanian national poet—which Faik Konitza published in two successive issues. The first bears the title *Albania* and the second *The Pellazgs—the Albanians*.⁵² The author wanted to construct an image of Albanians as the most ancient people in the region described in an Albanian Golden Age, as opposed to the present miserable predicament where they found themselves.⁵³

This mythical presentation of Albanian history had a variety of elements. Myths of territory, military valor, the myth of ethno-genesis and antiquity,

48 Jup Kastrati, (1995), p. 106.

49 The main idea prevailing in Albanian studies is that Albanians are the successors of Illyrians, but with certain connections to those more ancient populations which had lived within the current borders of Albania. Aleks Buda (2002), pp. 5–13.

50 *Albania*, no. 1, (1897), p. 5.

51 *Albania*, no. 2, (1897), p. 23.

52 *Albania* no. 3, (1897), p. 40; and *Albania*, no. 4, (1897), p. 50.

53 *Albania*, no. 4, (1897), p. 72.

myths of kinship and shared descent were intermingled in the text with each other. By establishing a direct link between Pellazgs and Albanians, Konitza aimed to assert their superior right to the territory in which they lived, over all other populations.

Konitza used these myths as instruments of self-definition and identity transfer. They created an Albanian distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* the other people. They were different from the Greeks and the other people surrounding them. On the other hand, it provided the targeted community with a new identity, a homogenous national one that transcended all the other modes of self-definition, be they religious or regional ones.⁵⁴ Konitza and other Albanian authors, through their writings on Albanian history, wanted to give hope to their co-nationals that they might reach Albania's former splendor in the future, as a prosperous nation in its own right.

The theory of Pellazgs as the predecessors of the Albanians was not an invention of Konitza, or other Albanian authors who published in his review. As Nathalie Clayer has written:

*Comme dans le cas grec, turc ou arabe, la science occidentale a exercé une 'influence' sur les débuts de la construction identitaire albanaise. Elle a fourni des outils qui ont été utilisés et transformés en fonction de leur propres buts et du contexte dans lequel ils évoluaient, un contexte différent de celui dans lequel les auteurs occidentaux avaient conçu leurs theories.*⁵⁵

Clayer attributes the "discovery" of the Albanian people by Western scholars to three factors: 1) the growth in the early 19th century of the political interests of European Great Powers towards the areas, partially or entirely populated by Albanians; 2) a Romantic push to better know Greece, which resulted also in "discovering" another people living nearby, that is, the Albanians; 3) the development of sciences like philology, comparative linguistics and history. Stavro Skëndi mentions also lexical and ecclesiastical works in the vernacular by Orthodox and Catholic priests, which showed the antiquity

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵⁵ Clayer, (2007), p. 119. "As in the Greek, Turkish or Arabic case, the western science has exerted its 'influence' on the starting of the Albanian identity construction process. It provided the tools which were used and transformed depending on the pursued targets and the context in which they evolved. This context was different from that in which the western authors conceived their theories."

of the Albanian language.⁵⁶ Among the most important Western authors that wrote on the Albanians' origin and language were: Malte Brun (1775–1826); Johann Thunmann; F.C.H.L. Pouqueville, French consul to Janina; Johann Georg von Hahn, Austrian consul to Janina, who in 1854 published his *Albanesische Studien*; Franz Bopp; etc.⁵⁷

These studies contributed in forging an image for the Albanian nation that was that of a very old “nation,” autochthonous and speaking a very old language considered to be the heir of the Pellazgian. Malte Brun and Hahn especially emphasized the Pellazgian roots of the Albanian nation and saw it as the common source from which Greek and Latin people sprang. The language in particular was a means through which this link was demonstrated. Hahn used it to decipher the names of Greek deities implying a temporal precedence for Albanian.⁵⁸

Those studies delineated a certain profile for the Albanian “nation,” which was later taken on by various Albanian authors of the time of the National Movement. Apart from the very old origins going back deep in history of humankind, the Western authors depicted the Albanian “nation” as a warrior people, albeit a noble one, isolated in their mountains. Another constitutive element which was taken by the Albanian nationalist intellectuals was the superficial religious character of the Albanians and its division into two main dialectal-cultural groups.”⁵⁹ The northern more rural and more religiously fanaticized Gegs, and the southern more urban and subtle Tosks.⁶⁰

But interest in the old origins of the Albanian people as a topic was constructed and used by the Albanians living in Italy too. They were the representatives of the Albanian diaspora settled in Italy in the 15th century, after Ottoman domination of their regions. In the early 19th century they started their efforts to build an Albanian identity. Their enterprise was focused on two main directions: 1) publications in the Italian language on the origins, and the history of Albanian language and “nation”; 2) compiling a literary corpus

56 Skëndi, (1967), p. 112. *Albania*, no. 1, (1902), p. 19.

57 Skëndi, (1967), pp. 111–29; Clayer (2007), pp. 160–70. Since the first issue of *Albania* (1897), in the article “*La langue des fils de l'aigle*” on the ancientness of the Albanian language, Konitzta refers to Johann Georg von Hahn's *Albanesische Studien*, Jena, 1854.

58 Jorgaqi, vol. 3, (2001), p. 19.

59 Jubani, (1871). See also Pekmezi, (1924).

60 Clayer, (2007), pp. 126–127; *Albania*, no. 7, (1897), pp. 116–119; *Albania*, no. 8, (1902), p. 202.

through collecting popular songs.⁶¹ Among the most distinguished figures in this respect were Angelo Masci (1758–1821), Giuseppe Crispi (1781–1859), Jeronim de Rada (1814–1903) and Vincenzo Dorsa (1823–1885).⁶²

The Pellazgian theory, which considered Albanians to be their heirs, was a prevailing element of their discourse. Another characteristic of the writings of the Albanians of Italy was the stress put upon the Albanian-Greek distinction, and also the creation of a national pantheon with Skënderbej, Philippe, Alexander and Pyrrhus. All these elements are loyally reproduced in the above-mentioned poems published in Faik Konitza's *Albania*.

Throughout the 19th century the Albanian-Greek contrast was present in the nationalist discourses of Albanian intellectuals. If, on the one hand it is true that “each culture constructs its discourses in opposition to another and this allows the culture to see itself as enduring and unique, as a bearer of moral true,”⁶³ on the other, the image of the Albanians, as opposed to the Greeks, was developed in concrete political backgrounds and its function was variable. As Nathalie Clayer has written:

*Après la Guerre de Crimée, c'est la poussée de l'hellénisme, à la fois dans le Royaume de Grèce et dans l'Empire ottoman, qui renforça le courant albaniste, soit par association, soit par réaction.*⁶⁴

After the Congress of Berlin in 1878, when the Greek irredentist intentions targeted part of Albanian-inhabited lands in Epirus, the Albanian-Greek contrast was further sharpened and politicized. Albanian intellectuals of the time used this contrast to attribute to Albanians a territorial legitimacy as the heirs of the old Pellazgs, thus presenting the Greeks as latter day intruders.⁶⁵

61 Clayer, (2007), p. 128.

62 Nathalie Clayer has explained in her book that these scholars of Albanian origin came from the ranks of the Orthodox clergy, which was at odds with Bourbon Catholicism. On the other side, their identity-building activities were of a Romantic inspiration that praised the “essence of nationalities coming through the language, popular songs and customs,” in Clayer, (2007), pp. 128, 131.

63 Schöpflin, (1997), p. 28.

64 Clayer, (2007), p. 148. “It was the drive of Hellenism inside of the Greek Kingdom or inside the Empire, which after the Crimean War, reinforced the Albanianist stream, either by association or by reacting to it.”

65 Frashëri, (1899). See Bülent Bilmez's contribution to this volume. See also Vasa, (1879).

KONITZA, THE “CRITIC” OF THE NATION

In the first issue of *Albania*, Konitza wrote about the religious division among Albanians, epitomized by Muslim circumcision practice and Christian baptizing:

Another reason [for the religious division of Albanians] is that some Albanians are circumcised and some others baptized. Such issues are pretty laughable matters, and if any reader does not understand them, here it is briefly shown how they happen. When a boy grows up to become seven or eight, his father brings home friends, who drink, eat and sing, and then, fiddling, one rascal closes in on the poor kid, who yells and cries, and, with a scissor, cuts a slice of flesh off a body part which I would be ashamed to tell you. There are Albanians who do not practice such business, but they, when their boy is born, take him to a stinky-bearded priest, who nabs and dumps him stark naked into a washtub full of water. Do not get my opinion wrongly, please; I am not against those things, good or bad as they come, any person is free to believe and maintain them as his customs. But, with all due respect, I shall only ask you a question: can you understand how a man's origin can change from the fact that when he was a kid, a lump of flesh was sliced off him, or that he was put into a washtub with water? Myself, I don't get it.⁶⁶

No one from the first generation of the Albanian nationalist intellectuals (1878–1900) would be able to write in such a way. It was not a matter of indecency by a young journalist. It was a novelty in many respects. It was a grotesque description of religious practices in a lively and entertaining vernacular Albanian. The Albanian fathers of nationalism were too didactic and moralistic to be entertaining.

Konitza was a writer who opened new dimensions for Albanian literature of the early 20th century. The satiric and sarcastic tones in his writings and essays contrasted with the Albanian Romantic literature of the late 19th century, which mostly hailed “Albanian traditions and virtues.” Unlike his Romantic predecessors, who were the “teachers of the nation,” Konitza is considered to be “the critic of the nation,” who loved his country through criticiz-

⁶⁶ *Albania*, no. 1, (1897), p. 2.

ing the failures of his co-nationals.⁶⁷ Influenced by the French literature of the 19th century, for Konitza it was easy to discard many works of Albanian patriots as poor from a literary point of view.⁶⁸ Konitza was too sophisticated to appreciate the “nationalist outpourings on the lofty virtues of the Albanian people.”⁶⁹ In 1906, Konitza asserted that a good literary work had nothing to do with a patriotic content, but only with its pure artistic values.⁷⁰

With Konitza, Albanian prose entered the transition from Romanticism to realism.⁷¹ Through his translations, he offered to Albanian readers the masterpieces of world literature. He translated from Arabic *A thousand and one nights*, which appeared in Albanian with the title *Under the shade of the Date Palms*; Shakespeare, Miguel Cervantes, Henrik Ibsen, Edgar Allan Poe, etc. He held the opinion that translations from world literature would help the elaboration and a further refinement of Albanian language.⁷² The translation of these books into Albanian would be almost impossible using the linear and heavily dialectal form of written Albanian the fathers of Albanian nationalism, such as Shemseddin Sami Frashëri (1850–1904), or Pashko Vasa (1825–1892) used. Konitza was more colorful, richer and more expressive in prose. In fact it is also closer to present day written Albanian.

Faik Konitza occupied himself with the task of laying the foundations for modern Albanian prose and a literary critique as an important genre of *belles lettres*. For Konitza, the Albanians would enter modern civilization not only endowed with a language of their own, but with an elaborate and stylish Albanian literary language. In short, with regard to the parameters set for a literary language, Konitza's contribution can be summarized as: 1) stressing the aesthetic values of the language; 2) establishing a personal style which was different from that of the first Romantic generation of the Albanian patriots.⁷³

When compared to Konitza, Shemseddin Sami Frashëri represents both similarities and differences. Both Sami and Konitza strongly stressed the importance that Albanian language had for the “awakening” of the Albanian nation. Though Sami, living and working his entire life in Istanbul, and

67 Jorgaqi, vol. 5, (2001), p. 142.

68 Jorgaqi, vol. 5, (2001), p. 348.

69 Destani, (2000), p. x.

70 Jorgaqi, vol. 1. (2001), pp. 246–47. In this article Konitza set out his ideas to critically follow the Albanian letters and establish a literary critique.

71 Jorgaqi, vol. 5, (2001), p. 235.

72 Jorgaqi, vol. 5, p. 121.

73 Jorgaqi, vol. 5 (2001), p. 287.

Konitza, who spent his life in Western Europe and the US, worked in different periods of time and in different cultural contexts, they both tackled important issues in dealing with the written Albanian. These were the alphabet, the purification of the Albanian language, orthography and the creation of neologisms.⁷⁴ Like Sami, Konitza too based his theories of the ancient origins of the Albanians upon the findings of the Western "*Albanologie*" and made Romantic use of the Albanians' "Golden Age" of the time of Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbej in the 15th century.⁷⁵ This because at the close of the 19th century, Romantic elements in Albanian literature co-existed with realism and it is not possible to draw a clear-cut line between these two literary streams. They continued in their symbiosis even in the first decades of the 20th century. Therefore, it would be more correct to define Konitza's literary production as a kind of blend of Romanticism and the new elements of realism.⁷⁶ In fact his literary legacy bore the connotations of the two historical periods in which he lived.

I would disagree with the conviction that Sami created the Albanian literary language.⁷⁷ Sami dealt with the most fundamental elements of a written language, such as the alphabet, formation of new words and first grammars. Sami could not establish his own style when writing in Albanian. His written Albanian was a path-breaking work and as such it had more of an enlightening and legitimizing value than an aesthetic one. Sami aimed at proving that the Albanian language existed—while Konitza's pretences were of a higher level: positing that this language can produce art.

No one before Konitza had devoted so much attention to the problems of Albanian literary language as a means of bringing Albanians closer to each other. This derived from a deep awareness of his that Albanians were too divided among themselves to make up a nation. These divisions had to do not only with religious differences, but were also heightened by regional cleavages. Konitza stressed the different cultural Albanian typologies in clearer terms than the fathers of Albanian nationalism.

In Konitza's texts the northern Geg was the embodiment of the true Albanian, its traditions and character. The southern Tosk had a kind of "Alba-

74 Kaleshi, (1978), p. 195. *Albania*, no. 6 (1897), p. 99. See also Bojan Aleksov's contribution to this volume with regard to the elaboration of Serbian language by Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj.

75 See Bülent Bilmez's contribution to this volume. See also Clayer, (2007), p. 275.

76 Jorgaqi, vol. 5 (2001), p. 133.

77 Kaleshi, (1978), p. 178.

nianness” that yielded his “essence” to changes brought about over the course of time. The Geg implied uniqueness, exoticism and archaism. The Geg is not “touched” by “alien” influences, a good many of them living in the middle of high mountains, practically seen as inaccessible spots. His image is associated mostly with the mountaineers of northern Albania, as opposed to the urban southern lowlander Tosk, more open-minded as well as more exposed to the outside world.

This imaginary sees the resilient Geg as a stumbling-block against time and change. Thus, it gains an aura of being loyal to pristine virtues, but also symbolized backwardness and transpired as a sense of getting lost in the modern world. The Geg was easy prey for the sarcastic and aristocratic Konitza. Very often in his texts the Geg resembled a fine specimen suitable for a museum of ancient times, to which the roots of the nation could be traced back.

Here is one of the many dialogues invented by Konitza, between a rude northern Geg and a more nationalist and progressive southern Tosk:

Tosk- Do you want me to teach you Albanian my brother?

Geg - What are you talking about Tosk?

T - Look at this book. It is Albanian. Listen a bit...

G - You are trying to make me “*kaur*” [Christian in Ottoman]?

T - What is this stupidity? Learn your language, nothing wrong is with it.

G - What are these *kaur* writings? Get out of here, *kaur*...

This is the way most of Moslem Gecs are used to thinking. They are the biggest obstacle to the progress of the nation. There is a great need to produce nationalist propaganda in Gegheria [northern Albania], because otherwise it will have been in vain.⁷⁸

The superiority of the more emancipated Tosk comes out through the terms he uses in the dialogue. When addressing the Geg, the southern Tosk uses the term “brother,” but, all the more, he shows an eagerness to teach Albanian to the former. The Geg is backward as he does not understand the benefits of learning Albanian and he refuses the Tosk’s offer of brotherhood. The combination of Muslim and Geg is seen as fatal for progress, and, for Konitza, it was tantamount to stepping backwards in time. In 1899, he wrote that the National Movement is less developed in northern Albania and “par-

⁷⁸ *Albania*, no. 4, (1901), p. 15.

ticularly among Moslems, who do not even know that their language can be written.”⁷⁹

Here is another example where Konitza saw religious factionalism as an Albanian malaise compounded by the ignorance of the northern Gegs:

The bad thing is that our Geg brothers do not have the same love for their language as the Tosks do; because in all towns and villages of Toskeria [the southern part of Albanian-inhabited lands] there are Albanians who write and read their language, and are glad when they receive Albanian journals. But in Gegeria [the northern part of Albanian-inhabited lands] people who love their language and their country are rarer. Unlike many areas in Toskeria, people in Gegeria haven’t yet understood that religion is religion and Albanianism is Albanianism.⁸⁰

The Geg pattern of backwardness and ignorance was a deeply entrenched belief displayed by Konitza in different texts and periods of time. In an unfinished popular version of the history of Albania written in 1935, Konitza wrote that the people of the mountainous north, called “Gegs,” lived in complete isolation and consequently they had “greater patriarchal simplicity than the rest of their countrymen, and their whole mental outlook was decidedly medieval.”⁸¹

In the texts of Shemseddin Sami Frashëri, the division of Albanians into Gegs and Tosks was not so well articulated.⁸²

In the political treatise *Albania what it was, what it is and what it will be*, already mentioned in Bülent Bilmez’s contribution to this volume, Sami’s concept of an Albanian nation was that of a socially homogenous community, where solidarity, common sense and love reigned over anything else. Albanians are shown as a community characterized by horizontal fraternity. He wrote:

79 Jorgaqi, vol. 3, (2001), p. 48.

80 *Albania*, no. 11, (1898), p. 203. It is interesting to see how in *Albania* the journalist explains to the common people the idea of a “nation” through the verses of the Koran in Arabic. It is like speaking to the people the way they understood the best. It is also an attempt at convincing people that believing in an “Albanian nation” is not a sin, but allowed by their religion. Also *Albania*, no. 2, (1897), p. 36.

81 Jorgaqi, (1957), p. 112.

82 See also Bülent Bilmez’s contribution to this volume.

[...] before being Moslem or Christian, Albanians are Albanians [...] In spite of religious difference, Albanians are not divided but united by their love between each other [...]⁸³

Sami considered the national solidarity between Albanians a strong link which had survived from generation to generation and had not faded away with time.⁸⁴ The only division that Sami only vaguely mentioned, and as something not very important, was the internal regional division of Albanians into Gegs and Tosks. Anyway, he believed that the difference could be overturned by the elaboration of a literary language. This was a task that would be carried out by Konitza.⁸⁵

One of the major differences between Sami and Konitza lies with the fact that they lived and worked in specific political-cultural contexts. The way they approached the articulation of the Albanian nation was clearly influenced by those contexts. Sami worked as an intellectual during the last quarter of the 19th century, in a multicultural Ottoman Empire that was undergoing important changes due to modernization and Westernization of its state apparatus and the formation of ethnic nationalisms among its populations. His “Albanianism” was intertwined also with other discourses, such as Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism.⁸⁶

For Sami, an Ottoman intellectual, his Albanian identity was fused into a general “Ottoman” political loyalty, which he deemed a shelter for the various peoples comprising the “Ottoman peoples.”⁸⁷ On the other hand, his articulation of an Albanian nation was ambiguous. When he tried to establish a Latin-based alphabet for the Albanian language during the Eastern Crisis of the late 1870s, he simultaneously put forward a Muslim Albanian identity to argue against Greek territorial claims over Albanian-inhabited lands in the European part of the Ottoman Empire, while he evidently promoted a different discourse in other circumstances, due, in part, to state censorship.⁸⁸ He also played a major role in the consolidation of the modern Turkish language, presenting himself as a member of the Turkish “we” group.⁸⁹ Sami displayed

83 Frashëri, (1978), pp. 48–49.

84 *Ibid*, p. 47.

85 *Ibid*, p. 47.

86 Clayer, (2007), p. 273. See also Alexander Vezhenkov’s contribution to this project.

87 Frashëri, (2000), p. 315.

88 Clayer, (2007), p. 280.

89 See Bülent Bilmez’s contribution to this volume.

throughout his work a kind of coherence in recognizing the importance of the vernacular for the spiritual revival of the nationalities. Sami's simultaneous involvement in Turkish linguistic nationalism and his Albanian contribution should be seen from this point of view. All the more so, as his "Turkism" and his "Albanianism" were not rival modernizing projects, given that the respective lands did not border on each other.⁹⁰

Konitza was an openly laic modernizer. He never included religion as part of his Albanianess.⁹¹ If for Sami, Islam could be a channel for transmitting science and progress,⁹² Konitza was too "Westernized" and could not accept it. For Konitza, "Western Christian civilization" was without hesitation far higher than any other.

Finally, taking into account Miroslav Hroch's categorization of the linguistic programs of national movements, I think that Sami's works can fit better into phase A (celebration and defense of the language), and B (language planning and codification), while Konitza's input should be placed mostly in phase C (intellectualization of the national language).⁹³

With regard to their Albanian identity, Sami worked in a time (last quarter of the 19th century) when making the Albanian nation's existence known to the outside world was of paramount importance, requiring the presentation of a monolithic shape without internal breaches. Konitza operated in a latter (early 20th century) phase when the idea of the Albanian nation was to be diffused among his "co-nationals" and involved tackling various obstacles to its taking root. For this reason, he did not hesitate to highlight national deficiencies.

ALBANIAN STUDIES ON FAIK KONITZA AND HIS REVIEW, *ALBANIA*

Konitza's name was quickly rehabilitated after the fall of the communist regime in 1990. We now have a series of publications on him, including articles in the periodical press, books and collections of his literary output. Nonetheless, studies on Konitza's works are of a rather narrative style, and give a somehow more Romanticized representation of his name than a textual critique. Almost all of what has been written on him so far transpires as a kind of

90 Clayer, (2007), p. 283; Karpát, (2001), p. 339.

91 *Albania*, no. 4, (1903), p. 63.

92 Frashëri, (2004a), pp. 20–21; Frashëri, (2004b).

93 Hroch, (1994), pp. 15–17.

enthusiasm in “discovering” after a long period of silence such an interesting figure as Faik Konitza.

The way Albanian studies present him, especially in relation to the Albanian literary language, is strongly linked to some deeply entrenched ideological dogmas in Albanian studies. First of all it was always held that Albanians represent a specific case in the Balkan context with regard to religion. Albanians had never forgotten their nationality, despite being divided into three religious communities; this being due to their superficial religious affiliations. Secondly, and unlike other Balkan people who identified religion with nationality, Albanians had to cope with a far more difficult situation. Religious affiliations are taken as an obstacle to national unity, national awakening and political emancipation.⁹⁴ Consequently, the choice of language as being the “strongest link” by Albanian intellectuals of the National Movement is considered by Albanian historiography as more “rational” and more “scientific” when compared to religion.⁹⁵

In fact many studies on Balkan nationalisms emphasize the importance of national languages as a marker of nationality, and it cannot be taken to be an Albanian specificity. In fact, the use of language to define nations was an important part of national projects all over the peninsula, especially in the second half of the 19th century. As Paschalis Kitromilides has shown in the case of the rise of Greek nationalism in the early 19th century, the linguistically-based Greek community, as part of parochial secular ideals of nationalism, ran counter to ecumenical and theocratic values of Orthodoxy.⁹⁶

In general, Balkan nationalist intellectuals of the 19th century used language both as a means of enlightenment and unification, but also as a factor of national identity.⁹⁷ If Faik Konitza was a modernizer and nationalist intellectual with the intention of realizing the project of a cultural homogenous entity in a particular context, such as the Albanian nation, then an Albanian literary language was the most convenient tool to bring it into being. The Albanian literary language in this case is not merely the improvement of a “national attribute,” such as the spoken vernacular. It was the outcome of a selective process of nationalist intellectuals, who took certain elements from traditional culture to be incorporated into the new culture, the “national” one. This process of selection is more visible in the case of language, as “not all dialectal

94 *Historia e popullit shqiptar* [History of the Albanian people], vol. 2, (2001), p. 27.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

96 Kitromilides, (1994), p. 56.

97 Skëndi, (1980), p. 33.

features could be absorbed into a single literary standard, but the principle extends to every one of the national characteristics.”⁹⁸ The literary language was also an ideological construct with a highly symbolic significance. It secured continuity between old populations and Albanians, it was a strong identity-marker and at the same time, it could legitimize the Albanian nation in the eyes of Europe and give it license to enter civilization.

In Albanian studies the Albanian nation as a culturally homogenous community of people is not taken to signify a project in the minds of nationalist intellectuals based upon a certain context and conditions of modernity, but rather as a natural stage in the development of the Albanian people seen through a linear and finalist perspective. The Albanian nation was always there and the National Movement had the merit to “awaken” it.

One of the main reasons is the fact that Albanian historiography was born and developed after the Second World War. It coincided with the period of the communist regime, when the country was being steadily led towards its full isolation from the outside world. The communist period in Albania overlapped, and was inextricably linked to the ongoing, and yet unfinished nation-building process in the country. In a sense it completed that process, which had been set off by the Albanian monarchy in the 1930s. The first real national and modernist state in Albanian history coincided with the 50-year-long centralized communist state administration. It built up a capillary education system, one of whose main tasks was to inculcate a strong self-referential world outlook and nationalistic value system—hidden under a communist cover—in the Albanians. In spite of undeniable efforts to shake off the legacy of the past, the pervasive and the long-lived presence/interference of the communist state in both public and in private spaces has left its deep-seated traces, one of them being a strong Romantic/nationalist standpoint in dealing with history.⁹⁹

CONCLUSION

The Albanian nation of Faik Konitza was a community of people based on a common language, a common descent, the same blood and traditions. If he devoted much more attention to the creation of an Albanian literary language, it did not mean that common descent was of lesser importance. It would be

98 John-Paul Himka in Suny and Michael D. Kennedy, (2001), p. 111.

99 Clayer, (2007), p. viii; also Puto, (2003), pp. 91–105; and Puto, (2006), pp. 13–34.

better to see these factors as complementary and interchangeable elements in the hierarchy of national values. Religion could produce the image of a culturally heterogeneous Albanian nation, since Albanians belonged to three different faiths. Thus it had to be subdued through vernacularizing policies. Faik Konitza's concept of the Albanian nation was evolutionary, organic and historicist one. This aspect of his Albanian nation becomes clear when he deals with the Albanian literary language. In Konitza's writings the literary language is seen as a quality of a wider community that goes beyond the regional level.

This was well in tune with the liberal ideology of the 19th century, which presumed the creation of nations as a process of historical evolution going from smaller units to larger ones, from family, tribe and region to the national level.¹⁰⁰ By every means Konitza tried to make his review seem to address the whole Albanian-speaking population. One indicator in that direction was the attention devoted to language, namely insisting on creating a "national literary language" understood by all Albanian-speaking people. This would enforce among them the feeling of belonging to a wider and more homogenous cultural community, such as the "Albanian nation."

Konitza's nation was "a personalized nation," which in the eyes of its people, appeared as a single body in need of its own distinct space. As Hroch has explained, but also as it arises from Konitza's writings, these claims are based on appeals for two criteria: 1) for the principle of an area defined by ethnic homogeneity of its population, "as a common linguistic-cultural group"; 2) for the notion of a historic territory with its own traditional borders."¹⁰¹ Here the evocation of the Pellazgs is meaningful. Konitza believed in a cyclical development trajectory of the Albanian nation, going from birth, growth, to efflorescence and decline. This historicist perspective of conceiving the nation is personified by comparing past splendor to the miserable present.¹⁰²

Konitza was convinced that the Albanian people urgently needed to civilize themselves and were not yet ripe for an independent political life.¹⁰³ Therefore the main goal of his review *Albania* was to culturally and politically prepare the Albanian people for this future challenge. He brought in a variety of topics that ranged from linguistics, history, folklore, up to agriculture and com-

100 Hobsbawm, (1990), pp. 33, 38.

101 Hroch, (1993), p. 15.

102 Smith, (1991), p. 87.

103 *Albania*, no. 4, (1906), pp. 57–58; *Albania*, nos. 10, 11, 12, (1906), pp. 198–199.

merce.¹⁰⁴ The main aim of these writings was to teach Albanians how to improve themselves and go towards a higher level of emancipation as a precondition to deserve a political and independent life in the form of a national state.

Although Konitza was very critical of his nation, it seems that on certain occasions he assigned himself the role of “educator of the nation,” one who stood among the *avant-garde* of the Albanian nationalist movement.¹⁰⁵ This role is conceived in sheer contrast to those who, in the early years of the 20th century, were in favor of violent methods of reaching Albanian national affirmation.¹⁰⁶

*Il y a une douzaine d'années, on pouvait compter sur les doigts le nombre des nationaliste shkipëtar [Albanians]. Sans doute il ne manquait pas de gens dont une vague curiosité pour la langue nationale secouait quelque peu l'indifférence; mais les nationalistes sincères, avec des opinions fixées et un but précis, étaient fort rares et passaient pour des excentriques. Cependant, avec le temps, l'idée faisait du progrès et l'attrait de tout ce qui est neuf et hardi nous amenait de jour en jour des adhérents, généralement des jeunes [...] Educateurs de la nation, c'est-à-dire l'opposé de demagogues, nous n'avions nulle envie d'entrer en concurrence avec des charlatants frénétiques.*¹⁰⁷

104 For example in the article “Two words on agriculture and commerce,” Konitza explains the benefits coming from tilling the land with iron ploughs, *Albania*, no. 9, Brussels: 1898, pp. 165–166; in “Some words on livestock” Konitza shows the importance of commerce, agriculture and livestock for the prosperity of the country, *Albania*, no. 10, (1898), p. 184; in the article “Potato,” he explained the origin of this vegetable and its uses, *Albania*, no. 4, (1899), pp. 59–60.

105 Jorgaqi, vol. 3, (2001), pp. 18–60.

106 The “Macedonian” question of late 19th century and early 20th century was one of the most intricate affairs that the Ottoman Empire was facing in its European territories, Rumeli. It marked the starting of a period of intervention of the Great Powers, which pressed over the Sublime Porte to undertake reforms to “relief” the plight of the Christian Balkan populations. The ensuing territorial reorganization of Rumeli brought about an escalation of clashes among various Balkan nationalisms, such as Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian, Albanian, each of them contending various portions of the Balkan Ottoman dominions and trying to expand the respective “ethnic” space to the detriment of the other rivals. In this context, and under the example of the other Balkan nationalisms, Albanian armed bands were formed to “propagate” the national idea and “save” the motherland from the partition between the Balkan neighbours.

107 *Albania*, no. 5, (1907), pp. 118–119. “About a dozen of years ago, the *Shkipëtar* [Albanian] nationalists could be counted with the fingers of one hand. Of course, there was no lack of people whose vague curiosity about the national language would somewhat shake up the

In my opinion, Faik Konitza should be seen as a nationalist intellectual and a modernizer.¹⁰⁸ Throughout the period of publication of his review *Albania*, Konitza perceived a “national idea” or “national feelings” as being an elitist attribute, and not yet a common patrimony, or at best something developed only at a regional level.¹⁰⁹ The role he set himself was to transform it into an encompassing “national dimension.” In his perspective, the Albanian nation was a concept closely linked to that of progress, marking a higher stage of the evolution of the Albanian people.

Konitza’s outlook and activity should be placed in the ideological context of his time. He spent most of his life in Western Europe and was influenced by ideological and cultural streams of the 19th and 20th centuries. This period of time was, in Europe and its immediate peripheries, “a golden age of vernacularizing, lexicographers, grammarians, philologists, and litterateurs.”¹¹⁰ This century also marked a growing interest in questions of origin and descent of peoples and of their cultural distinctiveness and historical character. Since the 18th century, European thought had used “national character” as a necessary tool to explain the history of people.¹¹¹ The development of humanistic education and science inspired a belief in the possibility of progress and evolution of nations.¹¹²

Faik Konitza was an actor and propagator of a national project for Albanians. It was part of a modernizing process similar to that undergone by most Balkan countries in the 19th century. Konitza was part of that process, as he was also using the means produced by modernity, such as periodicals, newspapers, whose task was to grasp and develop the “spirit of the nation.”¹¹³ The audiences of the print media were seen as embodying the idea of a cultural community, and precisely this concern with culture—in the sense of particularity and community—was one aspect of modernity.

indifference, but, sincere nationalists were quite rare and regarded as eccentrics. However, as time went by, the idea made progress and the attraction of everything which is new and daring made disciples join us day by day, mostly youngsters. As educator of the nation, i.e. adversaries of the demagogues, we did not bother at all to enter into a race with frenetic charlatans.”

108 I am indebted to my friend and colleague Bülent Bilmez for helping me to find the proper definition of the work of Albanian nationalists of the time, such as Konitza.

109 Jorgaqi, vol. 3 (2001), pp. 18–60.

110 Anderson, (2003), p. 71.

111 Smith, (1991), p. 87.

112 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

113 Breuilly, (1993), p. 58.

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SHEMSEDDIN SAMI FRASHËRI (1850–1904): CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALBANIAN AND TURKISH IDENTITIES

BÜLENT BILMEZ¹

This paper deals with representative writings of an Ottoman intellectual, Shemseddin Sami Frashëri (1850–1904), who has simultaneously been represented in contemporary Turkey and Albania as one of the fathers of Turkish and Albanian nationalisms, respectively. Accordingly, he is known with two different names in these countries: “Sami Frashëri” in Albania and “Şemseddin (or Şemsettin) Sami” in Turkey. In order to avoid partisanship in this question, either his full name (as in the title) or the short version “Sami” will be used in this paper.

Sami’s contribution to the construction of two national identities both through his involvement in the first Albanian ethnically based movement and through his writings will be discussed here mainly by analysing some of his most representative writings. A brief “biography” of the texts² and of their author is first provided for purposes of contextualization. Two articles and a booklet by Sami make up the main text corpus of this paper: a Turkish article published in Sami’s own journal *Hafta* [Week] in 1881 in Istanbul;³ the pref-

1 I would like to thank my colleagues Suraiya Faroqhi, Christoph Neumann, Artan Puto, Adrian Brisku and Emma Sinclair-Webb for their most precious comments on the previous versions of this essay. I am also grateful to the fellows of the “We, the People” project, from the comments and criticism of which I profited most, both addressed personally to me during my resident fellowship in Sofia during the spring of 2005 and publicly during several meetings in Sofia and Budapest in 2004 and 2005. Special thanks go to Diana Mishkova whose merciless and most valuable criticism and suggestions on the content and style played an important role in the shaping of the last version of this paper. Two important works covering themes discussed in this paper were published after the paper was written and are therefore not referenced in the text: George Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle. Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913*, London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006; and Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais. La naissance d’une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe*, Paris: Karthala, 2007.

2 Quirk (1995), pp. 1–10.

3 Sami (1881), pp. 177–181.

ace (*Ifade-i Meram* [foreword]) of his monolingual Turkish dictionary *Kamus-i Turki* in 1900 in Istanbul;⁴ and his much-disputed Albanian book *Shqipëria* [Albania], published in 1899 in Bucharest.⁵ The focus with respect to the latter book will be on its first part, which presents in effect a mythological history of the Albanians and Albania. Sharing the same thematic and theoretical framework with his other texts discussed here, thus providing material for a meaningful comparative analysis, the themes of the first part of *Shqipëria* are particularly pertinent to the themes addressed in this volume. Furthermore, relevant entries in Sami's six-volume encyclopaedia *Kamus-ul Alam* [Universal Encyclopaedia]⁶ such as "Turk," "Turan," "Turaniye," "Albania," "Albanians" and other relevant writings will also be considered. It should be stressed that these writings have become part of two national canons by being counted among the founding texts contributing to the emergence of the national(ist) discourse in each case; and that they indeed contain pioneering ideas presented with groundbreaking vocabulary.

As a modernist Ottoman intellectual contributing through his publications to the construction of both Albanian and Turkish national identities and personally playing a part in the cultural and political activities of the first ethnocentric Albanian movement, Sami is certainly one of the interesting European intellectuals whose writings have been "left out of the 'core' European canon since the age of the Enlightenment."⁷ With two incompatible canonized images in two national historiographies featuring him as an initiator of two irreconcilable nationalisms, Sami's case is illuminating in that each of these conflicting and, in terms of the modernist/nationalist paradigm, paradoxical images have been constructed through a selective and biased reading of his writings while ignoring the other side's narrative. Elsewhere I have discussed the issue of his mythologization in Albania and Turkey and the role played by the press in this process.⁸ In this paper I attempt to bring the discussion of Sami's writings a step further.

The writings of Sami, variously described in different circles as (liberal) Islamist, Turkist, Albanianist, proto-socialist and/or modernist, "remained

4 Sami (1900a).

5 Sami (1899a).

6 Sami (1889–1898).

7 Cf. the initial description of the "We, the People" project.

8 For the construction of the "mythologized image" of Sami in the Albanian and Turkish historiography, see Bilmez (2003), pp. 54–57. For the role of the press of the both countries in this mythologization, see Bilmez (2006), pp. 71–125.

outside of the mainstream of scholarly thematization” in Europe.⁹ This paper concentrates on those of his writings which directly engage in the problematique of this volume: I will explore the political instrumentalization of the concepts of “folk,” “people” and “ethnos” in Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries.¹⁰ Sami was a prolific author writing in different genres in Turkish and Albanian: articles in newspapers and magazines published by him or others;¹¹ a monolingual (Turkish–Turkish) and three bilingual (French–Turkish, Turkish–French and Arabic–Turkish) dictionaries;¹² several booklets on issues such as gender (the position of women), literature, languages and linguistics, aimed at the popularization of modern science and modernization of popular culture;¹³ three theater plays;¹⁴ a six-volume universal encyclopaedia;¹⁵ several translations from French, Persian and Arabic;¹⁶ and a novel¹⁷ which has commonly (and mistakenly) been represented in Turkey as “the first modern Turkish novel.” He was also known through his writings on Islam and Islamic civilization, where he was trying to offer a modern (moderate) interpretation of Islam and its history, and to prove that Islam as such is not incompatible with modern (Western) civilization.¹⁸ His texts analyzed in this paper are the ones most directly and explicitly focusing on the issues of (ethnic) identity, representative of the problem area tackled by this collective work.

9 Cf. the initial description of the “We, the People” project.

10 Cf. the initial description of the “We, the People” project.

11 For a comprehensive collection of his articles published in the Ottoman press during the struggle of the League of Prizren (1878–1881), see Sami (2000).

12 Sami (1900a); Sami (1882); Sami (1884b); Sami (1886f); and Sami (1895).

13 For his booklet on women, see Sami (1879a); and for his Turkish works on literature, languages and linguistics, see Sami (1886a); Sami (1886b); Sami (1886c); Sami (1890d); Sami (1891d) and Sami (1899c). For his Albanian works, see Sami (1879b); Sami (1886d); Sami (1886e). For Sami’s Turkish books aiming at the popularization of modern science, see Sami (1879c); Sami (1879d); Sami (1879e) and Sami (1885c). His Albanian books with the same characteristics are Sami (1879g); and Sami (1888a).

14 Sami (1875a); Sami (1875b); Sami (1876).

15 Sami (1889–1899).

16 For his translations from French, see Sami (1872a), Sami (1873a), Sami (1873b), Sami (1878), Sami (1880) and Sami (1884a). For those from Persian, see Sami (1885b) and Sami (1899b), the latter being an edited collection of old poems by Baki including a translation of a Persian poem into Turkish. For his Arabic translation, see Sami (1901a).

17 Sami (1872b).

18 For Sami’s books that are taken as implicit indicators of his (moderate) Islamism, see his book in Turkish, Sami (1879f) and another book in Arabic, Sami (1885a).

1. SAMI'S IDENTITY-CONSTRUCTING OEUVRE AND ITS CANONIZATIONS

One can find accounts of Sami's life and works in many secondary sources (including encyclopaedia entries) in Western languages. However, they must be read with caution, because there is much contradictory factual information on concrete issues, as many aspects in his life have not yet been systematically studied. Here, only the information about his intellectual and political activities on which there is consensus in the historiography will be summarized.¹⁹

Known as one of the most productive members of the Ottoman intelligentsia of the last quarter of the 19th century, a linguist, lexicographer, novelist and playwright, Sami was born in 1850 in Frashër, a village in the district of Berat, in the south of today's Albania, in the Ottoman province of Yanya (the city of Ioannina in today's north western Greece). He was from a Bektashi family, whose members (the Frashëri brothers) would become the most prominent personalities of the so-called "Albanian nationalist movement" after the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878) between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, following the defeat of the Ottoman armies in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78. The treaty foresaw the formation of a Great Bulgaria as an autonomous self-governing tributary principality. Its territory included most of the previously Ottoman Balkan territories, including the ones inhabited by Albanians.

Having completed his initial education in traditional institutions (both at primary school and Bektashi *tekke*) in his village, after the death of his father he moved to Yanya together with his family, where he attended the famous Greek secondary school, Zossimea.²⁰ There he must have undergone a kind of *epistemological turnover* through exposure to "modern" ideas and "scientific" knowledge, learning of Western languages (French, Italian) as well as ancient and modern Greek, besides improving his proficiency in oriental languages (Ottoman Turkish, Persian and Arabic). His mother tongue was Albanian, which did not have a written tradition at that point, but to the development of which he and other intellectuals would later contribute.

Modern Turkish historiography maintains that Sami dealt with the "Albanian question" only through his writings in the press during the time of the struggle

19 For an article underlining different contradictory issues about Sami's life in the historiography, see Bilmez (2004a).

20 The essential role of this school in the intellectual and political formation of Sami has unfortunately not been studied yet.

of the League of Prizren (in Albanian *Lidhja e Prizrenit*) formed on June 10, 1878, just before the opening of the Congress of Berlin (June 13–July 13, 1878), which brought the main European Powers together to discuss the revision of the Treaty of San Stefano. The League was created by a socially rather mixed group of traditional and modern Albanian elites, with the support of the Ottoman state, which sought to use this local (Albanian) pressure against plans in Berlin for the expansion of the new Balkan states into the Ottoman territories inhabited mainly by Albanians. This “weapon” might well have played its expected role for the Ottoman state during and immediately after the Congress. But later it turned against the state as a radical group in the league continued to assert ethnocentric ambitions even after the boundary problems among the Balkan states were settled. These radicals opposed the empire and championed Albanian rights, but were finally defeated in 1881. The fact that Sami was taking an active part in the Albanian nationalist movement until the end of his life²¹ has always been neglected or denied by the Turkish historiography. However, as it has been commonly stated by the Albanian historiography, Sami had acted as “the chair of the Albanian Committee in Istanbul” since the beginning of the 1880s.²² The said “committee” was the Albanian society *Komiteti Qendror për Mbrojtjen e të Drejtave të Kombësisë Shqiptare*. [Central Committee for the Defence of the rights of Albanian People], which after the defeat of the League of Prizren was “re-organized illegally on the initiative of Sami in Istanbul to support the Albanian movement and to promote the publication of Albanian works.”²³ Sami pursued his activities within this clandestine organization as a nationalist Albanian intellectual until the 1890s.²⁴ It is well-known, furthermore, that he was actively involved also in the efforts of getting a licence for the opening of Albanian schools in 1885–87.²⁵ Meanwhile, and until the end of the

21 See the letter of Jani Vreto (1822–1900) sent to Sotir Kolea (1872–1945) on October 23, 1893. (*Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit* [Central State Archive], F. [Fondi/Stock] 54, D. [Dosja/File] 70, fl. [fleta/page] 59–68). Also see the text of his speech at a meeting on January 14/27, 1896 in the Albanian society *Dituri* in Bucharest (*Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit*, F. 21, D. 3, fl. 5–9).

22 See the letter of Thimi Mitko in Egypt to Jeronim de Rada in Italy sent on June 14/27, 1880 (*Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit*, F. 24, D. 54/6, fl. 186–187), the quotation is from fl. 186b. A common letter dated August 4, 1882 was signed by many prominent Albanian intellectuals in Istanbul including Sami, who was indicated as “the chair of the Albanian Society in Istanbul” (*Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit*, F. 51, D. 6, fl. 2b.).

23 Frashëri (1967), p. 88.

24 Frashëri(1964), p.152. See also Frashëri (1967), p. 88. Sami’s role as a chair of this committee continued until October 1900 (Frashëri (1967), p. 92).

25 Dodani (1930). See also Frashëri (1967), p. 86.

1890s, he was in contact with the newly emerging more radical Albanian nationalist circles abroad.²⁶ It was through these relations that his Albanian books were published in Bucharest and Sofia during his lifetime.²⁷ He was also one of the publishers of the first Albanian periodical *Drita* in Istanbul in 1884, which in 1885 changed its name to *Dituria*.

It must be emphasized, on the other hand, that the overwhelming majority of Sami's writings were in Turkish. Those scrutinized here have been canonized as a result of the efforts of several prominent Turkish nationalist scholars.²⁸ It is again these texts that have been chosen for publication as appendices in the monographs on Sami or in general Turkish anthologies, examples of which will be given further down, showing the role of "selective perception" in the construction of his image. The 20th-century Turkish historiography has typically portrayed these texts as early manifestations of Turkish (cultural) nationalism in the 19th century. Furthermore, the fact that in his last years Sami was studying some old Turkish texts like *Kutadgu Bilig* [*Qutadgu Bilig*], *Orhon Abideleri* [*Orhun* or Orkhon Inscriptions] little known in Turkey in those days has been referred to in the Turkish historiography as a proof of his complete devotion to Turkism:²⁹ "Advocating the idea that Turkish language and literature already began in Central Asia, Sami worked on *Kutadgu Bilig* and *Orhon Abideleri*, aimed at making them known to the Turkish readers, and suggested that *Kutadgu Bilig* should be read in schools."³⁰

26 A small part of Sami's correspondence with the Albanian nationalist circles in the diaspora was published in Dodani (1930), pp. 32–35, 43 and 45–47.

27 For his Albanian works published in Bucharest, see Sami (1886d); Sami (1886e); Sami (1888a); Sami (1888b); and Sami (1900b). For the Albanian translation of one of his dramas published in Sofia, see Sami (1901b).

28 See, for example, Akün (1997), p. 416; Akün (1998), p. 27; Levend (1969); Çalık (1996) and Tural (1999), p. 28.

29 See, for example, Levend (1969), pp. 150–151 and Çalık (1996), pp. 64–65.

30 Tural (1999), p. 28. *Kutadgu Bilig* was one of the earliest Turkish books written in 1068 by Yusuf Has Hacı and was translated in his last years by Sami into Ottoman-Turkish through the help of Vambery's (1832–1913) German translation (Tural, Şemsettin Sami, p. 121). This book played an important role in the construction and promotion of the myth of antiquity and the continuity of the Turkish "nation" from the Turkic people of Asia among the first Turkish nationalists. These *Orkhon inscriptions*, on the other hand, are named after the Orkhon Valley in Mongolia, where these 8th-century inscriptions were discovered in an 1889 expedition by Nikolay Yadrintsev. They were published by Vasily Radlov and deciphered by the Danish philologist Vilhelm Thomsen in 1893. The inscriptions were written in the Old Turkic script, also known as Orkhon-Yenisey script or Göktürk script, which is the alphabet used by the Göktürk from the 8th century to record the Old Turkic language.

Having made a name for himself as a translator, author and editor in the Ottoman-Turkish press and published the above-mentioned short-lived newspapers *Sabah* and *Tercüman-ı Şark* in Istanbul in the 1870s, in 1880 Sami began the publication of his first magazine *Aile* [Family] which was mainly addressed to women. However, it also ceased after its third issue. For five months in 1881 he published the weekly periodical *Hafta* [Week], which continued and ran to 20 issues in total.³¹ That magazine was a popular “encyclopaedic” periodical, aimed at popularizing modern (Western) knowledge and ideas among “ordinary people” and at advocating “modern civilization” and “progress.” The main issues there concerned the fields of language (linguistics), sciences, literature, art and ethics. An established nationalist Turkish scholar has singled out this periodical as particularly important, in that Sami is said to have started to display there his “Turkist perspective through his writings on Turkish language.”³² The article analyzed further down here was published in the 12th issue of this periodical, in August 1881.³³ It is very telling that this article has never been translated into Albanian, although most of Sami’s other articles in the Turkish press supporting the Albanian cause have been translated and published. In Turkey, however, this article is conventionally referred to as a key text demonstrating Sami’s revolutionary contribution to the construction of Turkish nationalism.³⁴ Besides, it is one of the few that have been reproduced (transcribed in the modern Turkish alphabet) as an appendix to books on Sami³⁵ and in anthologies³⁶ in Turkey.

Another Turkish text examined in this essay, the preface to Sami’s monolingual dictionary *Kamus-i Turki* [Turkish Dictionary], was published in 1900.³⁷ The title chosen by the author at a time when the dominant term for the language of the Empire was “Ottoman,” has been taken by the Turkish

31 *Hafta, edebiyat ve fînun ve sanaiye dair mecmuadır*, Sahibi: Mihran, Muharriri: Şemseddin Sami, no. 1 (22 *Ramazan* 1298 [August 18, 1881]) – no. 20 (21 *Safer* 1299 [January 12, 1882]).

32 Akün (1997), p. 416.

33 Below, it will sometimes be referred to this text by Sami in short as “the article.”

34 See, for example, Akün (1997), p. 416; Levend (1969), *passim*; Çalık (1996), *passim*; Akün (1998), p. 27 and Tural (1999), p. 28.

35 See Çalık (1996), pp. 135–139; Tural (1999), pp. 66–70 and Levend (1969), pp. 152–157.

36 See, for example, İsmail Habib (1940), pp. 168–171; Hizarcı (1955), pp. 103–105 and Kudret (1973), pp. 211–212.

37 Sami (1900a). In 1998 the dictionary was reprinted in Ottoman-Arabic alphabet with an additional “preface” by Ömer Faruk Akün in modern Turkish; Sami (1998).

historiography as indication that here was a pioneer of Turkish nationalism. Although such a claim may be more commonly agreed today, it was indeed a pioneering revisionist suggestion at that time, contributing directly to the emergence of Turkish nationalism.³⁸ The preface to this dictionary has also been interpreted by different authors as a proof of Sami's Turkish nationalism.³⁹ For my purposes here I would like to pay attention to this "preface" because it was published just a few months after his Albanian book, where the abovementioned article was published almost 20 years earlier. A comparative analysis of these writings would help us to answer the question of whether Sami's identity politics changed during this long period.

The much-disputed Albanian book *Shqipëria*, on the other hand, was published in 1899 in Bucharest without indication of the author and the publisher.⁴⁰ Sami's authorship of this book has usually been rejected in Turkey but was never disputed in Albania or elsewhere in Europe a topic that deserves, and has received, a separate treatment.⁴¹ The book's canonization had already begun in the first years after it was published.⁴² Indeed, the main work by Sami used in the construction of his mythologized image in Albania had always been and still is this book, because it has always been seen as (one of) the first "manifesto"(s) of Albanian political nationalism foreseeing an Albanian state.

2. VISIONS OF ALBANIAN AND TURKISH IDENTITIES

One of the most important characteristics of Sami's *Shqipëria*⁴³ is the (re)-production of the "myths of the ethnogenesis and antiquity" of the Albanians. Before discussing these myths, it must be reminded that "[e]very ethnic collectivity will have one or possibly more than one *myth of ethnogenesis and*

38 Kushner (1977), pp. 8–9.

39 Below, it will be referred to this text in short as "the preface."

40 Sami (1899a).

41 My own delving into this issue led me to the conclusion that Sami was the author of the book, the first edition of which was published by the Albanian association *Shoqëria Dituria* [Society of Knowledge] in Bucharest in 1899; Bilmez (2006b), pp. 45–87; Bilmez (2004b), pp. 79–110; Bilmez (2005), pp. 97–145.

42 For praise of the book and a long quotation in the Albanian press of that time, see *Drita*, no. 1, November 1/14, 1901, p. 1.

43 Sami (1899a).

antiquity.”⁴⁴ Typically these myths have been used by the nation-constructing intellectuals to prove superiority over all other ethnic groups in a given territory and/or the primordial rights of that ethnic group against the claims of neighboring countries. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that “the myth of origin, or ethnogenesis, was of special importance for Albanian nationalist writers.”⁴⁵

In its first section entitled “Pelasgians” it is bluntly maintained that the Albanians are the oldest people of Europe and direct descendants of the Pelasgians.⁴⁶ It opens with the following statement:

Albania consists of every land (*vendi*) where Albanians live. The Albanians are one of the oldest people [nations] (*kombeve*) of Europe. They came from Central Asia to the European continent before all others [...] ⁴⁷

The aim of this claim, being one of the core elements in the Albanian 19th-century nationalist discourse, seems obvious: to declare the Albanians as the real and only “owners” of the territories they inhabited by proving their greater antiquity. Here was an intellectual, himself later on mythologized, acting as a myth-maker and propagator of modern myths. As was common in his time, Sami dealt with the earliest history of the Balkans selectively replicating contemporary theories based on very little information and arbitrary speculations.⁴⁸ Sami lists all the names of the ancient peoples in the Balkans commonly mentioned at that time: Illyrians, Epirotes, Macedonians and Thracians all of them as off-shoot tribes (*fis*) of the primeval Pelasgians.⁴⁹ He also ventured into the etymology of the names of the Balkan ancient peoples to show that they were ethnically Albanian.⁵⁰

44 Schöpflin (1997), p. 34.

45 Misha (2002), p. 42.

46 Sami (1899a), pp. 3–6.

47 Sami (1899a), p. 3. In his encyclopaedia entry “Albania” Sami describes the territories of the geographical entity in details; Sami (1889a), p. 149.

48 Anthony Smith argues that “[m]yths of origins, whether of the genealogical or the territorial-political kind, are usually regarded by members and by many analysts as key elements in the definition of ethnic communities. Not only have they often played a vital role in differentiating and separating particular *ethnies* from close neighbours and/or competitors; it is in such myths that *ethnies* locate their founding charter and *raison d’être*.” Smith (2003), p. 173.

49 Sami (1899a), p. 5.

50 For such “etymology games” in Albanology and by Albanian intellectuals, see Malcolm (2002), *passim*, esp. p. 78.

The second (and rather short) section of the first part of the book was devoted to the Illyrians and the Epirotes. It should be noted that the idea of an uninterrupted direct link between the Illyrians and the modern Albanians, a theory (or myth) of the 20th century which has overshadowed the Pelasgian one, was not explicitly displayed here. However, an implicit connection between the Illyrians and the Albanians was hinted at, since the Illyrians were believed to have constituted one of the Pelasgian tribes, who were, as claimed by Sami in the previous chapter of the book, ancestors of contemporary Albanians. Furthermore, it was stated that:

according to the ancient Greek historians and authors the Illyrians and the Epirotes spoke the same language and had the same customs and traditions. From their language and customs stemmed later on those of today's Albanians.⁵¹

While studying the changes, additions and deductions in the later editions and translations of Sami's texts in Turkey and Albania, one can observe a kind of shift in the national discourses in the long term. An indicative example is the "editor's footnote" to a recent Albanian edition of *Shqipëria* in which it was claimed that the Pelasgian-theory which used to be dominant at that time, was later proved to be wrong.⁵² Indeed, there had been many conflicting and intersecting "theories of Albanian origins" among the European scholars since the 18th century and the Pelasgian theory did not exclude or reject the Illyrian one. Sami also defends in his book the Illyrian theory as a part of the Pelasgian one, which, for Sami, is the clearest proof of the autochthony of the Albanians in the region because the Pelasgians were supposed to be the earliest inhabitants of that region. What might be seen as a "shift" in the relevant discourse after Sami is rather the shift of emphasis towards the Illyrian theory, which has never meant a clear rejection of the Pelasgian theory. Neither was this shift straightforward; there have always been people still emphasizing the Pelasgian origins.⁵³

51 Sami (1899a), p. 7. For a comparison with the ancestor issue in *fin-de-siècle* Bulgaria in the framework of the identity problematique, see Stefan Detchev's contribution to this collective volume.

52 Sami (1999), p. 5, fn.1. Fatos Lubonja talks about a "replacement" of the "Pelasgian Theory" with the "Illyrian Theory" in later years as well: Lubonja (2002), p. 42.

53 It is remarkable to observe that the myths of ethnogenesis and "military valour and resistance" were among the few values remained dominant during the intellectual and political

Sami's *Hafta* article, on the other hand, starts with the question about the proper name of "our [Turkish] language" and its origin:

We do not think the term "Ottoman language" is quite correct, because this term is used only as the title of the State derived from the name of the family of the well known conqueror, the first of the Sultans who founded this state. Yet, the language (*lisan*) and nationality/ethnicity (*cinsiyet*) are older than the birth of the mentioned person and the formation of this state. The name of the people (*kavim*) who speak this language is really "Turks" (*Türk*) and the name of the language they speak is Turkish language (*lisan-ı Türkî*). This name, which is seen as a derogatory term by ignorant people and used by some for the peasants of Anatolia, is the name of a great community (*ümmet*) which should be proud to be called so.⁵⁴

Bearing in mind the pejorative use of the term "Turk," which in the late Ottoman Empire was not used by any ethnic group as an endonym, these sentences can be and are read as an appeal for national consciousness among the Turkish-speaking people, for whom this kind of self-perception was new.⁵⁵ Apart from the important fact that Sami obviously includes himself into this group (nation), it is interesting to see the reference to the "roots" of the Turks before the formation of the Ottoman Empire.

In this article Sami describes what Ottoman means: all people living as subjects of the Ottoman state are called Ottoman (*Osmanlı*). This definition, which can also be found in Article 8 of the first Ottoman constitution of 1876,⁵⁶ was repeated in Sami's Turkish dictionary, *Kamus-i Turki*, where it is added that an Ottoman is "a person who belongs to the Ottoman people and race" (*kavim ve cins*).⁵⁷ For Sami, the term "Turk," on the other hand, is the name of the great community, only a fraction of which is the subject of the Ottoman state:

The relationship between Ottoman and Turk is similar to the one between Austrian and German: Austrian is used for all people who are subjects of

history of Albania since Sami, in spite of many fluctuations and changes in different (pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist) periods and phases within these periods.

⁵⁴ Sami (1881).

⁵⁵ Kushner (1977), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁶ Gözübüyük and Kili (1957), p. 26.

⁵⁷ Sami (1900a), p. 927.

the Austrian State, the Germans of Austria being the dominant community among them. German [on the other hand] is used for all members of this big community, in Austria and in Prussia and Germany, as well as in Switzerland, Russia and elsewhere. Similarly, also members of all the peoples subject to the Ottoman dynasty are called Ottomans, whereas Turk is the name of a great community extending from the shores of the Adriatic to the borders of China and interior of Siberia.⁵⁸

In an entry on “Turks” in his six-volume encyclopaedia published in 1891, where it is stated that the Turks were a great and eminent people (*ümmem*) belonging to the Mongolian race (*ırk*) of the Turanian people (*ümm-i Turaniye*), Sami had already presented these arguments at length by referring to European scholars.⁵⁹ Similar information and arguments were repeated in the entries on “Turan”⁶⁰ and especially “Turaniye” in the same encyclopaedia, where, referring to European linguistics, different languages of the Turanian people were listed in a table. Being themselves of Turanian extraction, the Turkic group (*Türk zümresi*), the most populous people inhabiting the territories from Inner Asia to the Adriatic, are said to speak languages with only trivial differences. All these languages could be called Turkish.⁶¹ Ten years later, Sami repeated this argument in an entry on “Turks” in his Turkish dictionary where “Turkishness” (*Türklük*) is described as of “Turkish race/lineage” (*Türk cinsiyeti*).⁶²

People should not feel insulted by being called Turks, Sami taught, but, on the contrary, feel proud carrying this name, because “our language,” which had already existed for a long time by the time of the formation of the Ottoman state, is shared by lots of people in Asia outside the territories of the Empire as well. The language spoken by those people and “our language” are, according to Sami, two major branches of the same extraction.⁶³ Sami’s attempts to make the Turkish speaking people feel proud of calling themselves Turks can also be seen in his article published in 1897, where he praised the Turks as “an indeed very brave and warrior people.” He states that their language might include some rather unrefined characteristics, but that it should

58 Sami (1881).

59 Sami (1891a), pp. 1639–1642.

60 Sami (1891b), p. 1682.

61 Sami (1891c), pp. 1683–1685.

62 Sami (1900a), p. 399.

63 Sami (1881).

not be forgotten that old (Eastern) Turkish [the language spoken by the Turkic people in Asia as oppose to the one spoken by the “Western Turks” living in the Ottoman Empire] was a very developed language with a written tradition even before Islam. Furthermore, he claimed that it would not be an exaggeration to see Turkish as the most beautiful language in the world.⁶⁴

After discussing the brotherhood of all Turkish-speaking people in his *Hafta* article⁶⁵ Sami dealt with the issue of the Turkish ancestors: when “our ancestors” (*ecdadımız*) came from inner Asia, they did not bring their literature and the grammar of their language, but gradually invented and developed new literatures or grammars several times in history. When he talks about the Turkic people in Asia, whom he calls “Eastern Turks” (*Şark Türkleri*), Sami uses the term *hem-cinsler*, meaning “of the same ethnic group (nationality).” He includes himself among the “Western Turks” living in the Ottoman Empire through constant use of the pronouns “we” and “our”:

As I see it, since the language of the Turks in those distant regions is one with *ours*, it is perfectly proper to give them the common name of “Turkish language” and in cases where it is desirable for difference between them to be observed, to call theirs Eastern Turkish [*Türki-i şarki*] and ours Western Turkish [*Türki-i garbi*].⁶⁶

The rest of the article is devoted mainly to the modernization of this Turkish language.

The problematic use of the terms *cins/cinsiyet*, *ümmet*, *kavim*, *millet*, *halk*, *anasır*, *zümre*, etc. [race, stock, nation, people, religious group, etc.] by Sami in his Turkish writings deserves a separate discussion in terms of both conceptual history and conceptual-historical analysis of the discursive construction of the Albanian and the Turkish nations. However, these terms were used by Sami without clear definitions and distinctions. Though part of the European race paradigm, the discourse in Sami’s writings is not really an “accommodation and appropriation of the racist discourse and established racial hierarchy in Western Europe” as in the case of the Bulgarian discourse about

64 Sami (1897).

65 For a similar “belief in the naturalistic determinism of language as the most profound expression of national spirit,” by one of the first *Yugoslavian* intellectuals, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj (1833–1904), which “clashed with parallel identification strategies based on confessional and historical allegiances,” see Bojan Aleksov’s contribution to this collective volume.

66 Sami (1881).

“race,” and “descent.”⁶⁷ It was rather in later years, following the emergence of “political nationalism” among Muslim intellectuals, that the ambiguity started to decrease and the idea of “racial difference” in an ethnically based sense gradually gained more importance in Turkish nationalism. Indeed, “in the political rather than the scientific sphere, what is normally meant by ‘racial’ difference is a general sense of the ‘alienness’ or ‘otherness’ of communities or individuals that come from radically different cultures and religions, or whose appearance in terms of skin-colour or even costume is manifestly different.”⁶⁸

The pronouns “we,” “our,” etc. used in the definition of different collective identities. What makes Sami’s case remarkable is that at many places in his Albanian book he uses the term “we” meaning the Albanians.⁶⁹ If one considers that the Albanian intellectuals of that time defined Albanianness through, *inter alia*, not being Turkish, Sami’s case becomes even more striking: these two “we”s fused in one “author” were actually conflicting with and, at least in view of the definition of Albanianness, excluded each other.

In the last paragraph of his Turkish article, Sami hints at the “political” dimension of his Turkish nationalist ideas by claiming that through the unification of a reformed/standardized Turkish language, there will emerge a unified great Turkish people/nation (*Türk ümmeti*), with a population of 20 million, in the place of the present Western Turks that were “not more than eight to ten millions.”⁷⁰ Such remarks were understood by a contemporary Turkish scholar, Şecaattin Tural, as a sign of Sami’s Turkish “political nationalism.” Tural’s view differs from that of most Turkish scholars who rather tend to see Sami as a “cultural Turkist”: “Shemseddin Sami’s claim that the unification of the eastern and western Turkish languages would also create the basis for political unification is very important because it shows his contribution to the idea of Turkism. The entries ‘Turk’ and ‘Turan’ in his universal Encyclopaedia (*Kamus-ul Alam*) show also that geographically he does not regard ‘Turkishness’ as consisting of only the Ottoman lands.”⁷¹

Sami did not mention any state-like organization or other political entity of this Turkish-speaking people (such as nation), and it is not clear what kind of

67 Cf. Stefan Detchev’s contribution in this collective volume on the “instrumentalisation of the concept of “race” in the public sphere as well as supposedly scientific discourse” in *fin-de-siècle* Bulgaria.

68 Christie (1998), p. 230.

69 Sami (1899a), *passim*.

70 Sami (1881).

71 Tural (1999), p. 28.

unity he foresaw. But it is obvious that his revolutionary, groundbreaking formulations could be seen as first steps in the process of the “emergence of linguistic nationalism” among the Turkish-speaking people, which evidently contain characteristics of cultural Pan-Turkism. What is striking here is that they were written by a native Albanian speaker using similar rhetoric to contribute simultaneously to the emergence of an Albanian nation to which he also felt loyal.

The paradox gets highlighted when we come across a similar argument on Turkish language in a text published just a few months after the publication of *Shqipëria* and almost 20 years after his article. In the preface to *Kamus-i Türki*, Sami reiterated his theory of “one Turkish language with two (Eastern and Western) branches” and used again the self-ascribing “we” and “our” when talking about the Turkish-speaking people and the Turkish language. He also explained once again why this language should not be called Ottoman, but Turkish. This, together with the fact that the dictionary was published as a “Turkish Dictionary,” can be taken as an indication of a Turkish (cultural) nationalism. Equally remarkable is the following assertion in his Turkish article: “we have had a written and literary language for a thousand years.”⁷² Here, as in the Albanian case, the antiquity of the people was claimed to ensue from the antiquity of the language. Of course in the Turkish case it was clear that the Turks were not autochthones to the Ottoman homeland, that is, Anatolia. It is therefore worth noting that the question of who were the “autochthones of Anatolia” was totally elided by Sami.

Regarding Sami’s Turkish writings, it is worth emphasizing that there is no shift in the discourse in his different texts written at different times, although they were published almost two decades apart. Indeed, there was rather a gradual, albeit slow shift in the dominant paradigm in the Ottoman Empire between the time of the publication of his article and of his preface discussed above, and this was indicated by Sami himself in a press article published in 1898. At the end of his article about *one* Turkish language consisting of two main branches and several dialects and about the determining role it should play in the construction of one collective identity among its speakers, Sami reminded his readers that he had expressed this opinion 20 years earlier in the article published in *Hafta* (and discussed in this paper above) and had been attacked by many who claimed that “we” (the Ottomans) had no connection with eastern Turks or with Turks in general. Those Ottoman Turkish intellec-

72 Sami (1881).

tuals had claimed to be Arabs. Fortunately, since then, public opinion had changed quite profoundly and today, he argued, there were scholars in the Ottoman Empire specializing in the Eastern Turkish languages, the very name of which intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire had previously not wanted to hear.⁷³

3. AMBIGUITY OF NATIONALISM'S CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS: RELIGION, LANGUAGE, AND HISTORICAL HEROES

The modern projects of “collective identities” were largely based on the concept of “the people” as a new source of power. This new attitude was a direct component of the modernization process, which made the already complicated structure of overlapping “traditional” collective identities even more complex. By inserting the modern(ist) projects in this structure it generated an era of competing visions of conflicting and cross-cutting collective identities. Different ethnically based national projects were competing not only with the non-ethnic ones (like Ottomanism, Pan-Orthodoxy, Pan-Slavism, [Pan-]Islamism and/or any kind of federalism in the Balkans), but also and sometimes more radically with other ethnically based projects, especially when they were aimed at “the people” of the same traditional (usually religious) “we-group.” This is quite understandable as long as the intellectuals, who were responsible for the construction of the “nation” by redefining the traditional values and inventing totally new ones, used to verify the very existence of this nation by detaching it from another “we-group” that usually overlapped with or included it.

Sami's desperate effort, much as that of the bulk of modern(ist) Albanian intellectuals of his time, to prove that religion did not and should not play any role in (the construction of) Albanian national identity,⁷⁴ can be understood in this sense. Islam or Orthodoxy as umbrellas of traditional (pre-modern) “we-groups” posed a threat to Sami's projects of constructing allegedly very old, but actually new “we-groups,” that were to become an “Albanian nation” or a

⁷³ Sami (1898b).

⁷⁴ Sami (1899a), pp. 28 and 35–36.

“Turkish nation.”⁷⁵ The same can be said about the tension between “Ottomanism” and Albanian nationalism in the 19th century.⁷⁶ However, what is striking in the case of Sami is that in his different writings he also showed, to a varying degree, devotion to both the supra-national identities like Ottoman and (more indirectly) Muslim ones, while actively participating in the construction of new ethnically based identities. First, in the construction of the Albanian national identity not only discursively but also through political engagement; and, during his later years, in the emergence of Turkish nationalism through a novel and sometimes original way of representing the Turkish language and history as constituting a “nation” of Turkish-speaking people.

While persistently underestimating the role of religion in the Albanian case and making indirect references to the pre-Islamic history of the “Turks,” Sami overemphasized the cohesive role of language for the Albanians and the Turks. In the case of Albanians, the claim of antiquity was, as we saw above, based on linguistic facts:

Albanians speak one of the oldest and most beautiful languages of the world. The languages contemporary to, or sisters of the Albanian language, became extinct a thousand years ago, leaving but fragments behind. Albanian is contemporary to Ancient Greek, Latin, Sanskrit (the language of Ancient India, as well as the language of Ancient Persia), Celtic, Ancient German, etc. [...] A lot of [the above-mentioned languages] have not been spoken for thousands of years and have no life outside old books. They are called “dead languages,” while *our* native Albanian, though just as ancient as them, is alive and spoken nowadays as it used to be in the time of Pelasgians, who were Albanians just like *us* but disappeared since they forgot their language. The current inhabitants of the country called Albania today, however, retained their language very well and kept the old language of legendary Pelasgians spoken to the present.⁷⁷ [Italics added]

75 While ignoring the decisive role of religion in the construction of traditional collective identities of that time, Sami was sharing the common attitude of Muslim intellectuals, except Faik Konitza, who was one of the few Albanian intellectuals initiating anticlerical propaganda (cf. Artan Puto’s contribution to this volume). Anticlericalism similar to that of Jovan Jovanović Zmaj in 19th-century Serbia (cf. Bojan Aleksov’s paper in this volume) became a component of the nation-building discourse in Albania in the 20th century.

76 For “Ottomanism” and “Macedonian nationalism” as projects of supra-national collective identities, see Alexander Vezenkov’s and Tchavdar Marinov’s contributions to this volume.

77 Sami (1899a), pp. 15–16.

This emphasis on language as the main component of Albanian national identity is one of the main characteristics of Sami's thesis.⁷⁸ This is most explicit in the following lines:

The sign of nationality is language; every nation has got its own language. A nation that forgets its language or gives up the mother tongue to make use of another language consequently loses its genuine nationality and becomes the part of the nation whose language it uses.⁷⁹

For him linguistic unity should ensure the cohesiveness of the modern identity of the Albanians who were divided in different geo-political (Geg and Tosk) and confessional (Orthodox, Catholic, Bektashi and Sunni Muslim) groups. These undeniably dominant traditional collective identities and therefore the segmentation among the allegedly existing Albanian "nation" could be fought only by emphasizing linguistic unity, whereas the importance of the difference in dialect and their role in the formation of different traditional "we-groups" were neglected or openly rejected.

The ambiguity of Sami's attitude towards religion (Islam) and languages (Turkish and Albanian) can be better understood if one looks at his other works in Turkish, where we can find moderate Pan-Islamist tendencies.⁸⁰ This would take another study. However, the book contains other aspects worth mentioning here. The contradictory treatment of religion is especially apparent in Sami's treatment of the historical figure of Skenderbeg. Having saved Christian Europe from the "infidel" Ottomans through his longstanding resistance against the Islamization/Ottomanization of Albania in the 15th century, Skenderbeg was "mythologized by the Catholic church as a 'Champion of Christianity'."⁸¹ Sami did not hesitate to declare him as "the only real Albanian national hero."⁸² Considering the fact that Sami was a Muslim dedicated to Islam, which he used to praise in his other writings, this paradoxical attitude becomes more interesting. In his encyclopaedia, however, in the entry on

78 Sami (1899a), pp. 9–10, 17–19, 36–37, 46–49. For a similar attitude of another Albanian intellectual of that time, Faik Konitza, see Artan Puto's contribution in this collective volume.

79 Sami (1899a), p. 17.

80 Sami (1879f) and Ş. Sami (1885a).

81 Lubonja (2002), p. 92.

82 Sami (1899a), pp. 11–13.

Skenderbeg, Sami had avoided the kind of praise characteristic of his Albanian book.⁸³

The paradoxical representation of the Ottoman Empire in Sami's book starts in this chapter on Skenderbeg, but becomes most explicit in the next chapter on the period of Ottoman rule: Sami contributes to the mythologization of Skenderbeg as a national military leader who resisted the Ottoman invasion. However, he does not complain about Ottoman rule before the *Tanzimat* (the reform movement from above in the Ottoman Empire after 1839). He even indirectly praises the pre-Tanzimat period of Ottoman rule and highlights especially the role of the Albanians in the Imperial administration.⁸⁴

In an entry on Albania in his six-volume encyclopaedia, where the country's geographical and administrative structure was discussed, Sami admitted that Albania had never enjoyed an administrative unity since it fell to the Ottomans. Until the *Tanzimat* administrative reforms from the 1840s onwards, it had been partitioned into different provinces and now it was divided into four administrative provinces (*vilayets*): Ioannina, Monastir, Kosovo and Shkodra.⁸⁵ In his Turkish dictionary, published 10 years later, Sami described Albania as "[t]he country inhabited by the Albanians [namely] the Western parts of *Rumeli* [the Balkan peninsula]; [comprising] the administrative districts (*vilayets*) of Kosovo, Shkodra, Monastir, Ioannina."⁸⁶

Yet another controversial issue is Sami's attitude to Bektashism. Although Bektashism has been the fourth confession in Albania besides (Sunni) Islam, Orthodoxy, and Catholicism, in his book Sami does not count it as one of the confessions in Albania and names only the other three.⁸⁷ However, he counts

83 Sami (1890c), pp. 927–928. Fatos Lubonja remarks on the general ambivalence among Albanians to the legacy of Skenderbeg, illustrating this with a line from a poem by the Albanian poet, Vaso Pasha: "With the intention of unifying the Albanian people who were divided into three religions, Vaso Pasha, a Catholic who had served the Turkish Empire, wrote in one of his most famous poems: 'The religion of the Albanians is Albanianism.' In the collective memory of the Albanians, the figure of Skenderbeg (first treated in a national romantic spirit by the Arberësh, the Albanians of Italy) is removed from its religious content. Albanians find it difficult to decide, which is his most important name, 'Gjergj Kastrioti,' his Christian name, or his Turkish name, 'Skenderbeg'" Lubonja (2002), pp. 92–93.

84 Sami (1899a), pp. 13–15. Sami takes *Tanzimat* as the turning point in the history of Albania and the Albanians, when their centuries-long freedom came under threat.

85 Sami (1889a), pp. 149–153.

86 Sami (1900a), p. 31.

87 Bektashism is officially acknowledged as a fourth confession in today's Albania besides (Sunni) Islam, Orthodoxy, and Catholicism.

the heterodox (mainly Bektashi/Alevi) “dervishes” as participants in religious councils in future in Albania.⁸⁸ He also advertises Bektashism as in some ways exemplary for the Albanian nation in the sense of presenting a model for brotherhood and solidarity among its members.⁸⁹

All in all, Sami’s brand of nationalism exhibits certain internal tensions. In all his writings Sami advocates a kind of ethnically based nationalism, highlighting mainly a common language and history. Although, as mentioned above, in some of his writing we can find certain moderate Pan-Islamist tendencies implicitly praising a supranational collective identity based on religion, he never gives up the idea of the modern ethnically based nation as the ideal collective identity in the modern world.⁹⁰ In the case of Albania this is clearly declared in *Shqipëria*.

Generally speaking, we can say that an independent nation-state is the ultimate aspiration of any (political) nationalism. The Albanian “state” as foreseen by Sami, however, is not always described as an independent nation-state, but often rather as an autonomous country and a vassal of the Ottoman Empire.

In his Turkish writings, however, we do not encounter any explicit call for the creation of a political/administrative or geographical entity for the “Turks.” The only forthright nationalist element in his Turkish texts is the emphasis on the common language connecting the “Turks” of the Ottoman Empire both among themselves and with the “Turks” living outside of the Empire. This perception of a collective (“Turkish”) identity was not only a blow to the idea of “Ottomanness” (*Osmanlılık*) as an imperial collective identity (defined by the loyalty of the subjects/citizens to the state/dynasty), but also to the traditional Muslim perceptions of the “common past” as starting with Islam or, alternatively, with the foundation of the Ottoman state.

Sami must have been aware that any supra-national project of an imperial (Ottoman) or religious (Muslim) collective identity would, by definition, be rivalling his ethnically based ones, both “Turkish” and “Albanian.” He tried to

88 Sami (1899a), pp. 81–83.

89 Sami (1899a), p. 91.

90 One can also interpret his moderate Islamist tendencies as an attempt towards using religion as a component of the nation. According to Kedourie, “[i]n nationalist doctrine, language, race, culture, and sometimes even religion, constitute different aspects of the same primordial entity. The theory admits here of no great precision, and it is misplaced ingenuity to try and classify nationalisms according to the particular aspect which they choose to emphasize.” (Kedourie (1996), p. 67).

prove the superiority of the ethnic elements (language, common past, etc.) over both the supra-national (imperial, religious) and the sub-national (e.g., tribal) ones. Religion in particular, as the hitherto dominant element in traditional definitions of collective identity, took an important place in his (and other Albanian nationalistic intellectuals') writings on the Albanian case.

4. INTELLECTUAL SOURCES

Besides explicit signs of influence of 19th-century Albanology on Sami's texts, which can be observed through direct references, we can also see their implicit impact on his book, where he reflects on the common "Albanological" knowledge at that time. Terms and techniques developed in the European tradition of these studies were borrowed by Albanian intellectuals of that time, Sami being one of the most important among them, and used in the discursive construction of national identity. Numerous facts and myths in Sami's book were borrowed from this same tradition. This can be best observed where he dwells on "the antiquity of the Albanian people and their language." The myth of antiquity, serving the creation of a national pride among the Albanians, was based on the novel information found in the works of European scholars. Although there were different theories competing with each other during the 19th century, Sami was certainly devoted to the Pelasgian theory which also encompassed the Illyrian one.⁹¹

Indeed, Sami was only repeating in his Albanian book the information and arguments that he had already expressed 10 years earlier in three separate entries in his encyclopaedia on the Pelasgians, Illyrians and Albanians.⁹² One can also find similar information in his entry on the Arians in the same encyclopaedia, where the old languages Illyrian, Macedonian, Thracian and Phrygian were listed under the branch of Pelasgian in a table of the Arian languages.⁹³ In his monolingual Turkish dictionary published in 1900, Sami described "Albanianness" (*Arnavutluk*) as "Albanian race/lineage [*cinsiyet*] and membership in this race/lineage" without mentioning the Pelasgians as the supposed ancestors.⁹⁴

91 For a concise account of different theories on Albanian ethnogenesis among the European scholars and their reception among the Albanian nationalist intellectuals, see Pipa (1989), pp. 155–161; Malcolm (1998), pp. 28–40 and Malcolm (2002), pp. 73–79.

92 Sami (1890a), 1528; Sami (1890b), pp. 1161–1162 and Sami (1889b), pp. 143–148.

93 Sami (1889c), pp. 164–167.

94 Sami (1900a), pp. 30–31.

Characteristic of Sami's book is the amalgamation of different discourses, or "interdiscursivity." As an interesting case, one can discuss the fusion of the modernist paradigm observed especially in the last part of the book, where Sami painted a modern(ist) picture of the future Albanian society and state, on the one hand, and his Romantic attitude throughout the same book, on the other. He underlined the positive effects of the centuries-long isolated life of Albanians, away from civilization, in the "barbarian times":

How did it happen that Albanians were able to preserve their language during all these barbarian times? How was it possible that the Albanian language survived without changes or damages despite the lack of letters, writing and schools, while other languages written and used with great care have changed and deteriorated so much that they are now known as other languages? The answer to all these questions is very simple: Albanians preserved their language and their nationality not because they had letters, or knowledge, or civilization, but because they had freedom, because they always stood apart and didn't mix with other people or let foreigners live among them. This isolation from the world, from knowledge, civilization and trade, in one word this savage mountain life allowed the Albanians to preserve their language and nationality.⁹⁵

This Romantic picture of isolated "barbarian" life might remind us of Rousseau's idea of the "noble savage," which is also displayed, though implicitly, when Sami expressed, at several places in the book, his admiration for the Albanians as brave warriors. Nevertheless, Sami's ultimate goal was the modernisation of Albania, which logically meant elimination of all those pre-modern values and institutions: the last and longest part of his Albanian book is devoted to concrete suggestions for a modern Albania.⁹⁶ It is noteworthy, furthermore, to remember that the Ottoman government at that time had actually been attempting modernization of the empire, including Albania. It is not astonishing to see this ambivalence in other regions of the world as well. Writing on India during the British colonial period, Rumuna Sethi states that

⁹⁵ Sami (1899a), pp. 17–18.

⁹⁶ Sami (1899a), pp. 52–89. As discussed in Artan Puto's contribution in this collective volume, another prominent figure of that time, Faik Konitza, was also "an actor and propagator of a 'national project' for Albanians, or to put it differently, of a modernizing process..."

[...] the writing of indigenous history has spread to take two self-contradictory courses: configuration within the orientalist constellation by an emphasis on the ancient past, and urge to break away from that very past. [...] The ambivalence is seen in the abandonment of ancestral culture for a more advanced standard and the demand that the ancient be retained as a mark of identity. Both the reliance on antiquity and the affirmation of modernity persistently held the emerging nation-state within the orbit of Orientalism, representing what Partha Chatterjee calls the “liberal-rationalist dilemma” of nationalist thought.⁹⁷

The direct influence of Turkology studies on Sami’s Turkish texts studied here is not that clear, as there is no direct reference to any “source.” It can be stated, however, that Sami was transmitting the common knowledge and ideas of European Turkology of his time (as a component of Orientalism) when discussing the Turkish language and its (potential) role in the definition of a Turkish nation and the brotherhood of all Turkic peoples. The decisive role of western Turkology (which wrought a “paradigm shift” in the minds of many Ottoman Muslim intellectuals) has also been acknowledged with gratitude by the “founders” of Turkish nationalism themselves.⁹⁸

It must be underlined that Sami’s role as at times a direct, and at other times an indirect, “importer” of ethnocentric knowledge and ideas from the West was more revolutionary in the Turkish case than in the Albanian one. For, in the period in which Sami and his contemporaries were constructing the Turkish cultural nationalism, Albanian nationalism was already at a more advanced stage. It is difficult to speak of a *political* Turkish nationalism not only in the period analyzed here but until Sami’s death in 1904. However, it is remarkable to see Sami in close relationship with Turkish intellectuals, some of whom would also become leaders of political Turkish nationalism: Vëled Çelebi [İzbudak] (1869–1950) and Necip Asım. Sami had friendly relations with the publisher and the writers of the journal *İkdam*, published with the subtitle “Turkish Newspaper,” which had an important place in the spread of cultural Turkism and the promotion of the idea of nationalism in Turkey.

Finally and more importantly, it is this consistent nationalistic discourse inherent in Sami’s writings that has kept them in the public eye through different periods and regimes in Albania and Turkey. It is to this peculiar contri-

⁹⁷ Sethi (1999), p. 17.

⁹⁸ Ziya Gökalp (1966), pp. 5–9 and Akçuraoglu (1990), pp. 34–35.

bution to two incompatible nation-building processes—a paradox, if viewed within the framework of the modern nationality paradigm—that we shall turn in the concluding section.

CONCLUSION: AMBIGUITY AS NORMALITY

To be able to understand the (apparently) paradoxical case of Sami contributing to both Turkish and Albanian nationalisms, we must situate his thoughts in a broader context, which has been conventionally described as Westernization, Europeanization, or modernization. There were concurrently various alternative projects for collective identities in the Ottoman Empire based on political, social, linguistic or religious elements. Some of these projects were in strong opposition. It was the all-encompassing “master project” of modernization that offered a framework within which it became consistent to support simultaneously different sub-projects for collective identities that were both overlapping and conflicting with each other. It was this wide-ranging master project that rendered all other projects for collective identities only “instruments” in the march towards the ultimate target of “civilization.” Seeking the attainment of that all-encompassing goal of “modernization” above everything else, Sami was, first of all, a *modernist*, who regarded as instrumental other (minor) projects pursuing the construction of a modern collective identity within a modern (civilized) society. This identity could be either ethno-national or religious (Islamic) or imperial (Ottomanism). The last two might seem to be a continuation of the traditional (and vague) collective identities; they were, however, thought as modern identities constructed through re-interpretation and/or re-formation of traditional cohesive elements. Ethno-national identity (i.e., “nation”), on the other hand, was the ideal modern collective identity built thorough the use of newly-discovered or invented cohesive elements like common language, myth of common descent, etc. without refusing the opportunistic use of religious and imperial colours as well. According to many modernist intellectuals like Sami, the modern “nation” was the most developed (civilized) form of human society, a “national identity” was the ideal collective identity, and the “nation state” was the ideal political, economic and cultural framework for it.

There is a clear consistency, in this broader context, in Sami’s contribution to the discursive construction of modern national identities both for the “Turks” and for the “Albanians.” He attempted to accomplish this by bestowing on language itself a new role and meaning and by developing a new lan-

guage (through ethnocentric re-interpretations of old words, invention of new ones, linguistic reform, etc.). Here was an indication of the discovery of the people and its power by a liberal populist intellectual. A very good example is Sami's advocacy for the rapprochement (*tekarub*) between the written Ottoman-Turkish language and the language of the ordinary people (*avam*).⁹⁹ Similarly, the then Ottoman Turkish literary tradition, which Sami saw as undeveloped and distorted (*pek geri ve yanlış bir yola sapmış*) by diverging from the popular Turkish literature,¹⁰⁰ could be improved by the rediscovery of folk literature, as the young nationalist poet M. E. Yurdakul (1869–1944) did in his pathbreaking poetry book, *Türkçe Şiirler* (1899).¹⁰¹ As a reaction to the traditional Ottoman Turkish poetry that was a component of high culture not intelligible to ordinary people, this book consisted of poems in everyday Turkish of everyday people and was therefore accepted by the Turkish historiography as one of the initial manifests of explicit Turkism in literature. This pathbreaking project was praised by Sami in a letter to Yurdakul,¹⁰² because, for “national development,” such efforts were very desirable: “The expression of the national sentiment and opinion: This is poetry, this is literature!”¹⁰³ Yurdakul's attitude and Sami's praise for it are clear instances of the “romantic passion for the folkloric rediscovery of the ‘people’.”¹⁰⁴

A problem arises rather within the paradigm of nationalism, according to which every individual is supposed to have one national identity only. As has been clearly shown in recent studies on nationalism, a national identity is usually defined through the use of cohesive elements (invented values and traditional ones that have been attributed a new meaning and importance). In addition, it is important for the adherent of nationalist doctrine to avoid being confused with “the others,” who are sometimes very artificially separated from the targeted group. As “not being Turkish” was one such determinant for “being Albanian” in the case of Albanian nationalism, it is paradoxical in the framework of the paradigm of nationalism to support, and even, to contribute to both nationalisms. It is important to realize that Sami was not an intellec-

99 Sami (1898a).

100 Sami (1897).

101 Mehmet Emin (1898).

102 This letter was published as a “preface” in Yurdakul's poetry book, and later republished (in the modern Turkish alphabet) as an appendix to a Turkish monograph on Sami: Levend (1969), pp. 158–160.

103 Levend (1969), pp. 158–159.

104 Cf. Stefan Detchev's contribution in this collective volume.

tual who opted for one national identity (and initiated the elaboration of a respective nationalism) at one time in his life and for another one in a next phase. Neither did he consider either of these two identities as a sub-identity of the other one. Although he called both Turkey and Albania his “country,” he never contemplated the question of his personal “homeland.”¹⁰⁵ The unfamiliarity or strangeness of his views to us today may lie rather in *modernity* that sees multiple-national-identity as a paradox or abnormality. In “transition periods” such as the one in which Sami was active, an era of radical and rapid shift in mega-paradigms (“Westernization”), overlapping and conflicting collective identities were normal condition.

Sami confirms it, but under the special conditions of the late Ottoman Empire.

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105 For the contrasting attitude of Jovan Jovanović Zmaj (1833–1904), a Serbian nation-constructor from the south of Hungary, who “referred to Hungary as his dear homeland” and for whom “the Serbian language remained his symbolic homeland” cf. Bojan Aleksov’s contribution in this collective volume.

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NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

Bojan Aleksov is a lecturer in the history of Southeast Europe at the University College of London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies. His research focuses on the relationship between religion and nationalism and the influence of modernization on religious institutions and popular religiosity in Central Europe and the Balkans. He works also on religious conversions, transition from Ottoman to “European” rule and the politics of history and historiography. He is the author of *Religious Dissent between the Modern and the National: Nazarenes in Hungary and Serbia 1850–1914* (2006). He has published extensively in Serbian and contributed articles to a number of international journals and edited volumes.

Bülent Bilmez is an Assistant Professor in the History Department of Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey. He completed his PhD at Humboldt University, Berlin, in 1998. He works on socio-economic, intellectual and political processes of modernization in the late Ottoman Empire, modern Turkey and the Balkans, and the history of construction of national identities and nation-states. He is the author of *Demiryolundan Petrole: Chester Projesi (1908–1923)* (From railways to petroleum: The Chester project [1908–1923]) published in 2000. He is currently working on a monograph on Shemseddin Sami Frashëri.

Stefan Detchev is a lecturer in Bulgarian history and historiography at the Department of History, Southwestern University of Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. His PhD dissertation dealt with the Russophile and Russophobe ideologies in late nineteenth century Bulgaria. His research interests and publications are in the field of modern and contemporary Bulgarian history with an emphasis on political ideologies and the public sphere, Bulgarian nationalism, historiography, racial thought, history of masculinity and sexuality.

Dessislava Lilova is Associate Professor at the Department of Cultural Studies, Southwestern University of Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. She has a PhD in Philology from the University of Blagoevgrad (1997). Her PhD dissertation entitled *Perceptions of Time in the Bulgarian Culture in 18th-19th century* discussed the evolution of the idea of historical time in the early modern Bulgaria culture. Her work revolves around nationalism studies, cultural transfers, and imaginary geographies. She is the author of *Vâzrozhdenskite znacheniya na natsionalnoto ime* (The meanings of the Bulgarian national name in the Revival period) (2003).

Tchavdar Marinov is a lecturer in sociology at the Department of Sociology, St Kliment Ohridski Sofia University. He has a PhD in History and Civilizations from the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales – Paris (2006). His PhD dissertation was on *The Impasse of the Past. The Construction of Macedonian National Identity and the Political-Historiographic Conflict Between Bulgaria and Macedonia*. He works on theories of citizenship, nationalism and nation-state and has contributed articles on aspects of nation-building processes in the Balkans, contemporary Balkan history, and anthropological approaches to ethnicity to a number of journals and edited volumes.

Diana Mishkova is Associate Professor in Modern History of Southeastern Europe, Senior Researcher and Director of the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia. She works on comparative modernization of Southeast-European societies and the European peripheries in the 19th and 20th centuries, problems of nationalism, modern political ideas and historiography in Southeastern Europe, and methodology of comparative historical research. She has authored, among others, *Prisposobyavane na svobodata. Modernost-legitimnost v Sârbiya i Rumânîya prez XIX vek* (Domestication of freedom. Modernity and legitimacy in nineteenth-Century Serbia and Romania) (Sofia, 2001). She is the editor of *Balkanskiyat XIX vek. Drugi prochiti* (The Balkan nineteenth century. Other readings) (2006) and co-editor of the forthcoming *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1775-1945): Texts and Commentaries*, Vol. IV. Currently she is the coordinator of “Regimes of Historicity and Discourses of Modernity and Identity, 1900-1945, in East-Central, Southeast and Northern Europe,” an international research project of CAS Sofia (2008-2010).

Artan Puto is a PHD candidate at the European University Institute in Florence (Italy). His dissertation explores "*The idea of 'nation' during the Albanian National Movement 1878-1912*" among leading Albanian nationalist intellectuals. He is the editor-in-chief of the cultural and historical quarterly *Përpyjekja* (Endeavour), published in Tirana. His research and publications focus on issues of Albanian and Balkan nationalism, the communist regime and nationalist politics in post-World War II Albania.

Kinga-Koretta Sata is a lecturer in the history of political thought and political theory at the Political Science Department of Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She has a PhD in History from the Central European University, Budapest (2003). Her PhD dissertation entitled *József Eötvös's post-revolutionary political ideas and their reception, 1850-1913* discussed the political oeuvre of one of the most important Hungarian state theorists. Her research interests and publications revolve around the history of modern Hungarian and Romanian political thinking and nationalism studies.

Levente T. Szabó is a lecturer in literary and social history, and literary sociology at the Department of Hungarian Literary Studies, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. His PhD in Social history of literature from the same university (2004) dealt with the professionalization of Hungarian literature in 19th c. His research interests are in nation-building processes in Eastern Europe, theories and history of social and literary modernization, anthropological and socio-historical approaches to literature. His book *Mikszáth, a kételkedő modern* (Mikszáth, the skeptical modern) appeared in 2007 with L'Harmattan Publishing House (Budapest) and discussed the overlapping strategies of social and literary modernization along the oeuvre of a major Hungarian writer. He is the editor of *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok / Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* (Cluj University Press, 2008).

Balázs Trencsényi is an Assistant Professor at the History Department of Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, and co-director of CEU Pasts, Inc., Center for Historical Studies. He holds a PhD in Comparative History from CEU (2004). His main areas of interest are history of political thought in East Central Europe, comparative historiography, and methodology of history-writing. He is co-editor of a number of volumes on political ideas and historiography in the region, such as *Nation-Building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies* (2001); *Dis-*

courses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1775–1945): Texts and Commentaries, Vols. I–II (2006–7); and *Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (2007). A collection of his studies on the history of political thought is available in Hungarian, *A politika nyelvei. Eszmetörténeti tanulmányok* (2007).

Alexander Vezenkov is an independent scholar based in Sofia. He studied history in the University of Sofia (MA, 1995; PhD in 2001), in the Central European University – Budapest (MA, 1998) and in Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales – Paris (DEA, 2000). His research interests include 19th- and 20th-century urban history, institutional history of the communist regimes, as well as different aspects of the Tanzimat period in the Ottoman Empire.

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